

Weizman breaks arm and thigh in fall

TEL AVIV (AP) — Israeli President Ezer Weizman broke his left wrist and thigh Friday after tripping when he stepped out of a helicopter. "I stupidly slipped off the helicopter... My fault entirely," the 73-year-old president told APTV from his bed at Hadassah hospital where he underwent surgery. Mr. Weizman joked that American and Israeli leaders appeared to be having a streak of bad luck recently, noting leg injuries suffered Friday by President Bill Clinton and earlier this week by Sarah Netanyahu, wife of the Israeli prime minister. "I don't know if there's anything significant about the fact that Mrs. Netanyahu broke a leg, then the president of the United States, Mr. Clinton apparently broke his leg, and your's truly broke his leg and a bit of a hip," he said.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جورديان تايمز يومية مستقلة عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية «الراي»

Jordanians to be airlifted from Albania

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein on Friday issued instructions for airlifting all Jordanians living in Albania. The Foreign Ministry will arrange a Royal Jordanian Air Force plane to carry them home when circumstances in the war-torn country allow. Acting Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Kamal Nasser said that upon the King's directives the ministry made intensive contacts with the governments of the United States, Italy and Greece through the Jordanian embassies in these countries to ensure the evacuation of the Jordanian nationals as soon as it becomes possible to do so. Dr. Nasser said he maintains continuous contacts with 44 Jordanians living now in Albania, adding that they are all safe and well.

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King to visit families of victims of Baqoura attack

HM condemns killing by soldier as 'very vile act' and considers it as aimed at his own sons and daughters and Jordanian Armed Forces

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein will travel to Israel at the weekend to visit the victims of a Jordanian soldier's shooting rampage along the border between the two countries, officials said Friday.

The King will most likely make the visit of a few hours on Sunday, the officials added.

A soldier on Thursday opened fire as about 80 12- and 13-year-old Israeli girls visiting the Baqoura area in the northern Jordan Valley border tourist spot in Jordan, killing seven and wounding five girls plus a teacher.

King Hussein said on Thursday he had told Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu he hoped to visit the families of the victims of the attack.

Speaking on his return to Jordan after cutting short a trip to Spain, the King spoke of "a deep sense of shame and anger" over the killing.

"This day is one I wish I never lived to see," the visibly shaken monarch said.

He said he had sent his condolences to Mr. Netanyahu.

"I conveyed an expression of my human feelings, my deep sorrow and regret about what happened... Also I expressed my hope if it were at all possible I would like to visit the families of the bereaved," he said.

The King hoped for a meeting "before long" with the Israeli leader,

Keilani to head investigations

HIS MAJESTY King Hussein on Friday assigned Mohammad Rasoul Al Keilani, former advisor to the King for national security affairs and former director of the General Intelligence Department, to chair a special investigation committee to investigate Thursday's attack at Baqoura.

In a message to Mr. Keilani, King Hussein said: "My keen interest in disclosing all facts and motives behind this crime has prompted me to entrust you with chairing and overseeing investigation in this crime."

The King cited Mr. Keilani's vast experience, integrity, efficiency, dedication and past record in revealing evil plans against Jordan.

whose policies he said this week were pushing the Middle East "towards an abyss of bloodshed."

Israeli ministers contended that such comments might have influenced the soldier who emptied his rifle clip into the group of teenage girls.

But the King said the attack was not a political act.

"This is not political, this is a very vile crime and everything will be done to get to the bottom of it," he said.

"I cannot offer enough

condolences or express enough sorrow to the mothers and fathers of these children who fell today," the King added. "I can only say that I feel a deep sense of shame and anger that this thing should have happened."

He said he would delay a decision on whether to go ahead with his planned trip next week to Washington, where he is due to meet President Clinton.

He said the shooting was "a crime which I feel has been aimed at me, at the members of the Armed Forces of Jordan and the people of Jordan, as much as it was aimed at the young innocent victims of this vile act."

Jordan has pledged that justice will be done and Israeli police will be kept informed of investigations.

"Today is a black day in the history of our country," His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan told reporters on a tour of the border area where the schoolgirls were shot.

"We in Jordan... all those thinking and conscious people who are your partners in the peace process... are deeply ashamed by what has happened today."

Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti said after a visit to the site that "the perpetrator has been arrested."

"He will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law and justice will be served," Mr. Kabariti said. "It is a

King's visit to Washington rescheduled

THE HASHEMITE Kingdom of Jordan and the government of the United States have agreed to reschedule Their Majesties King Hussein and Queen Noor's visit to the U.S., the Jordan News Agency, Petra, said. President Bill Clinton has renewed his invitation to meet with the King in the White House in the near future at a date to be mutually agreed upon, it said.

The White House also issued a similar statement.

"Partly because of King Hussein's schedule, both the Jordanian side and the US side felt it was better to postpone King Hussein's visit here," White House spokesman Michael McCurry said.

hideous crime, totally unjustified. My condolences to the families of the dead."

Mr. Kabariti reaffirmed that "Jordan has in the past and will continue to condemn all such acts of violence and terrorism regardless of who is responsible."

Officials said a joint Israeli-Jordanian commission was formed to investigate the shooting.

Mr. Kabariti, who is also

(Continued on page 7)



Jordanian doctors carry a wounded Israeli schoolgirl to an Israeli helicopter at Baqoura on Thursday after she was evacuated from a Jordanian hospital where she was taken along with others following an attack by a soldier (Reuters photo)

Attack an isolated incident and does not reflect Jordan's policy or conduct of its Armed Forces — Crown Prince

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan on Friday described Thursday's attack on Israeli schoolchildren at Baqoura as an individual act and said it should not be taken out of its inhuman context.

In an interview with the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), Prince Hassan stressed the need for not linking this individual isolated incident from

broader political issues which need to be addressed within the context of the Middle East peace process.

The Crown Prince emphasised the need to pursue efforts to establish a just, comprehensive and durable peace which guarantees rights of all the parties concerned.

He voiced hope that daily events and concerns, irrespective of their importance, will not lead to

ignoring important issues, including the Palestinian-Israeli track of the peace process and Jerusalem and refugee issues.

Prince Hassan described the shooting as a "black day for Jordan."

In reply to a question about the motives of the soldier, Prince Hassan said: "I can't speculate about the interrogation and we have no indication of what his state of mind was."

But I want to say that this was a crime and that any person who commits such a crime is obviously an imbalanced person."

Prince Hassan stressed that Jordanian soldiers were not politicised and were disciplined and the investigations will show if the man was unstable. He emphasised that justice will be served.

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Assailant was loner with psychological problems

By Tareq Ayyoub
The Associated Press

IBDIR, Jordan — The soldier who shot and killed seven Israeli school children was a loner and an elementary school drop out who had psychological problems, his family said.

But Ahmad Mousa Dakamseh, 28, had no history of violence and was not affiliated with any political group, family members said.

"He was never violent," Dakamseh's 62-year-old father, Mousa, said as tears flowed down his cheeks. "We're shocked by his action."

As he spoke he cradled a picture of his son sporting a thin black beard and a mustache.

"My boy was unstable," Dakamseh's mother said. "He had a psychological problem and used to have anxieties."

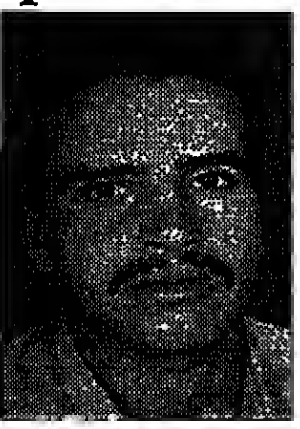
"He used to sit alone and stare in the open and think. He used to get angry sometimes, but cool down after a long walk," she said.

She wore a traditional black dress. In keeping with traditional Islamic guidelines of modesty she refused to give her name.

She refused to give any other details on what she described as her son's mental instabilities.

Dakamseh grew up in an isolated ranch in Irbid, a village of 2,000 some 150 kilometres northwest of Amman. The village overlooks the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights, Israel and the West Bank.

He herded sheep until he dropped out of school at age 12 to join the army, where he later worked as a driver. Dakamseh has three children, two boys and a



Ahmad Dakamseh

one-year-old girl.

"He was always secluded and he always looked sad and lonely," Dakamseh's father said.

Officials said neither Ahmad Dakamseh nor his older brother Bassem, also an army soldier, have a previous criminal or political record.

Dakamseh's father said his son "is not a terrorist." As he spoke, he reclined on a mattress on the floor of an empty living room with walls adorned by family portraits.

Dakamseh's mother said she felt "sad for the killing of the innocent Israeli girls and I console their families and share their grief."

Ahmad's cousin, Sultana, 40, said the Dakamsehs advocated peace with Israel and the shooting appeared linked to Ahmad's mental disorder.

"It seems that he had one of his anxieties when he started his shooting spree," he said. "It is not linked to anything political. I know my cousin well."

"The whole village is shocked by the heinous crime because we are for peace, because peace means a brighter future," he said.

Jordanians are appalled, but not totally surprised

By Randa Habib
Agence France Presse

AMMAN — The massacre of seven young Israelis in a crazed shooting spree by a soldier has profoundly shocked this Kingdom, but it has also tapped into mounting unease over the country's fledgling peace with Israel.

Every Jordanian questioned by AFP on Friday was appalled that a member of the country's armed forces could turn his gun on a group of innocent girls enjoying a school outing.

"Such an act is alien to Jordanian customs, which forbid the shooting of women let alone that of little girls," said one.

"Even in times of war, no Jordanian soldier would ever have acted in such a way. How could this happen in times of peace," asked engineer Akram Azzam, questioning the Kingdom's historic peace treaty with Israel in October 1994.

"This attack is perhaps proof that a bad peace is worse than war," he added.

Ihsan Kanaan, a teacher of Palestinian origin, described the massacre on Thursday at the border tourist spot of Baqoura as a "shameful crime," but he too pointed to the wider context of the ongoing crisis in the Middle East peace process.

"Once the shock has faded, we have to look carefully at what motives could have pushed a simple soldier to become a monster," he said.

"Israeli arrogance which tramples on signed accords with the Arabs and carries on with the expansion of Jerusalem regardless of the feelings of all Muslims, is responsible for this blind violence," Mr. Kanaan said.

Newspapers also focused

on the political fall-out of the tragedy, calling on Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to "learn the lesson from this attack."

Jordanian-Israeli relations plunged to their lowest point since the 1994 peace treaty just days before the attack, when King Hussein sent Mr. Netanyahu a letter accusing him of bringing the peace process to its knees with his hardline policies.

The King said Mr. Netanyahu had "humiliated" the Palestinians and provoked the spectre of violence by ploughing ahead with plans for a new Jewish settlement in Arab East Jerusalem and offering to withdraw from just a small parcel of West Bank land.

Officials stressed Friday that no peace with Israel could be "waterproof," and that "isolated and uncontrollable incidents" were always a possibility.

"King Hussein has often warned Israeli leaders about the growing feeling of frustration and anger," said one official, adding that there was genuine fear in political circles that the anger could snowball into violence.

"Extremism will damage tolerance if peace negotiations continue to drag and the Israeli government has to understand that moderate regimes will find it increasingly difficult to control extremists," a senior Jordanian official told AFP.

Its the Final Count Down for the Grand Opening of Y?ST?R?A?S Theme Restaurant & Bar

Israel rejects U.N. resolutions and vows to start Jerusalem settlement

Combined agency dispatches

ISRAEL VOWED Friday to press ahead with a contentious housing project in Arab East Jerusalem despite the killing of seven Israeli schoolgirls and warnings its hardline policy will spark more bloodshed.

Domestically, the shock, pain and anger prompted by Thursday's killings at a tourist spot on the Israeli-Jordanian border brought a temporary halt to criticism of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Diplomatically, the government presented the Jordanian soldier's still unexplained shooting spree as a result of violent attacks on Israeli policy from Palestinian and other Arab leaders.

It used the tragedy to justify its insistence that the peace process must be slowed to ensure Israel's security.

Mr. Netanyahu lost no time in reaffirming that he would not yield to pressure from any quarter over his plans for a large new Jewish settlement in Arab East Jerusalem.

"If anyone thinks the murder of little girls will bring this people to its knees... break our spirit or that we will relinquish our birthright, holy land and our eternal capital, he does not know the strength of this nation," he said in a forceful eulogy Thursday

night at the funeral of four of the slain girls.

At a six-hour meeting, cabinet ministers decided that bulldozers would start work on Monday or Tuesday on construction on the Arab East Jerusalem's Jabal Abu Ghneim.

The decision came despite warnings by leaders of the Shin Bet internal secret service that breaking ground at the project called Har Homa could lead to Palestinian demonstrations or even attacks against Israelis.

Shin Bet chief Ami Ayalon told ministers that Palestinian groups were pressuring Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat to allow them to throw Molotov cocktails at Israelis in protest at Har Homa, Israel Radio reported.

The Israeli government also rejected categorically a U.N. General Assembly resolution — passed by a vote of 130 states in favour and only the United States and Israel against — condemning the project as "illegal."

"This unilateral resolution undermines direct negotiations between the parties and will not contribute to the peace process," it said in a statement.

Mr. Netanyahu told the Maariv newspaper that Israel would not be swayed in its policies by international pressure or by

Thursday's slaughter.

"I will next week build on Har Homa and nothing will stop me," he said.

Mr. Netanyahu also accused the Palestinians of organising a plan to "cause spontaneous violence" similar to the clashes in September following the opening of a new entrance to an archaeological tunnel close to Muslim holy sites in Jerusalem that left more than 80 people dead.

Meanwhile, Israeli officials maintained their strong opposition to a meeting of international diplomats called by Mr. Arafat for Saturday.

Mr. Arafat, in remarks broadcast on Friday, expressed sorrow at the killing of seven Israeli schoolgirls and said the most important thing now was to push peace forward.

Asked by Israel Radio if he would meet Mr. Netanyahu, the Palestinian president said in English: "I have no objection. The most important thing (is) how to push forward the peace process."

"I am very sorry at what had happened and I contacted his excellency the president and his excellency the prime minister and offered my condolences by the name of the Palestinian people," Mr. Arafat said.

The telephone call to Mr. Netanyahu was the first contact between the two leaders since Mr. Arafat last

week angrily rejected a planned Israeli troop redeployment in the West Bank.

U.S. President Bill Clinton sent a letter to Mr. Arafat on Friday, one day before the international meeting on Middle East peace moves in Gaza, the Voice of Palestine Radio said.

It said the U.S. consul general in Jerusalem, Edward Abington, delivered the letter to Mr. Arafat in the West Bank town of Bethlehem shortly before the Palestinian leader returned to Gaza.

U.S. and Palestinian officials were not immediately available to comment on the report.

Mr. Arafat has called a meeting of U.S., European and Arab envoys for Saturday in Gaza that he says is needed to save the Middle East peace process.

Israel was not invited. In Washington on Thursday, House of Representatives Republican leaders led by Speaker Newt Gingrich told Mr. Clinton that U.S. participation in the Gaza conference was a mistake.

They said that by agreeing to take part, Washington was sending a message that it was possible to drive a wedge between the United States and Israel.

Thursday's attack put pressure on the United

(Continued on page 12)

Militants in Egypt kill 14, including 9 Copts

CAIRO (AP) — Gunmen who opened fire at people walking through a mostly Christian village in southern Egypt killed nine Coptic Christians and four Muslims, police said Friday.

About an hour after the shooting Thursday night, assailants shot at a Cairo-bound train some 20 kilometres south of the village, killing a 40-year-old Egyptian woman and wounding six men, the Interior Ministry said in a statement.

The train was travelling from the southern city of Luxor, whose ancient Egyptian monuments attract hundreds of thousands of foreign tourists every year.

The village shooting was the second major attack in Egypt this year and the second aimed at the country's Christian minority. It is likely to further embolden the government, which has boasted in the past that it has put an end to extremist attacks.

The massacre in Nag Dawoud village near Nag Hamadi, an industrial centre 460 kilometres south of Cairo, was denounced Friday by Copts and Muslims alike.

Milad Hanna, a housing expert and a prominent Copt, told the associated press in Cairo that the government was partly to blame for the attacks on Copts by not allowing them greater participation in government.

However, he said, "Egypt will remain a country for all Egyptians, Muslims and Copts. In each village they have lived together for centuries and I cannot imagine that the feelings of Copts will change as a result of these attacks."

Maamoun Hodeibi, deputy leader of the banned Muslim Brotherhood, said: "We once again condemn these criminal and evil acts."

"These acts are against the spirit of Islam," he said.

Gunmen emerged from a sugar cane plantation and began shooting randomly at people in the mostly Coptic Christian village of Nag Dawoud, security officials said. They said four masked gunmen carried out the attack and then fled back into nearby fields.

The officials, who spoke under customary rules of anonymity, said the attackers may have hit at the village in Qena province because police have increased their forces in other southern provinces to halt attacks by the radicals.

After last month's attack in Minya province closer to Cairo, a large number of police were sent to the area to try to flush out militants from hideouts in caves and sugar cane fields.

Police have long had a strong presence in Assiut, another southern province that is hotbed of the radicals.

The death toll Thursday was one of the highest since the militants began a violent campaign in spring 1992 to oust Egypt's secular government and turn the Arab world's most populous country into a strict Islamic state.

Police on Friday released a list of the names of the victims of Thursday's attack, saying at least nine were Christian Copts. In last month's attack, gunmen stormed into a church charity meeting in the village of Al Fiqriya, some 240 kilometres south of Cairo, killing nine Copts.

Following that slaying, angry clergymen and human rights activists demanded better security for Coptic churches and institutions. Mainstream Muslim leaders condemned the attacks since under Islam, Christians are a protected people.

Copts, who are descendants of some of the first converts to Christianity, make up about 10 per cent of Egypt's 60 million people. The rest are overwhelmingly Sunni Muslims.

Militants have attacked Coptic-owned pharmacies and jewelry stores to raise money for their rebellion and have targeted Christians as non-believers.

Some 1,070 people, mostly militants and police, have been killed in the violent campaign by militants since 1992.

Militants have also targeted trains and buses carrying tourists in an effort to cripple the tourism industry, a crucial source of revenue for Egypt's government.



A Lebanese student writes on his comrade's yellow shirt marked "425 Jews equal Nazis." U.N. Security Council resolution issued in 1978 called for an immediate Israeli withdrawal from South Lebanon. Lebanon marked Friday the 19th anniversary of Israel's first invasion of the country (Reuters photo)

Lebanon truce panel calls on combatants to spare civilians

NAQOURA, Lebanon (Agencies) — A five-nation committee monitoring a cease-fire agreement in South Lebanon on Friday again appealed to Israel and Hizbollah guerrillas to avoid attacking civilians.

The committee, that met for seven and a half hours in this Lebanese border town Thursday, reminded the combatants of the provisions of the U.S.-brokered understanding that ended a 17-day Israeli onslaught on South Lebanon last April.

According to the understanding, Israel and Hizbollah are banned from firing from or at civilian targets on both sides of the border. It does not preclude attacks on military targets, provided that they are not launched from civilian areas.

In a statement issued Friday, the committee did not specifically blame Hizbollah for the bombing, nor did it refer to the wounded Israeli soldier since its jurisdiction is attacks relating to civilians.

"The monitoring group acknowledged as factual that a car bomb was detonated by a Lebanese armed group on March 10, 1997, in proximity to an inhabited house on the road between Marqaba and Houla resulting in at least one civilian being treated for shock and causing damage to the house and a civilian vehicle, and deplored these consequences," the group said in a statement.

"The monitoring group once again strongly urged responsible authorities to ensure strict observance of the provisions of the April 26, 1996 understanding," the statement said. "It called on them to refrain from attacks affecting civilian populated areas and to do their utmost to avoid putting civilian lives and properties at risk."

The committee, set up to implement the April agreement, has representatives from the United States, France, Syria, Israel and Lebanon.

The meeting on Thursday was called to discuss a complaint by Israel that one of its soldiers was wounded Monday in a car bomb explosion near the village of Marqaba, 220 metres from the Lebanese-Israeli border.

A woman and her two children also suffered minor injuries from flying broken glass in a nearby building.

No group claimed responsibility for the attack.

Hizbollah said Friday it had destroyed an Israeli tank in the "security zone" occupied by the Jewish state in South Lebanon and "killed and injured its occupants."

It said one of its units "pulverised a Merkava tank travelling on the Jabal Hmayyed-Hariss road at around 1330 GMT" in the western sector of the occupied zone.

"Members of the crew were killed or injured," Hizbollah said.

in a statement issued from Tyre, around 80 kilometres south of Beirut and several kilometres from Israel's self-declared "security zone."

However, a source with the Israeli-allied South Lebanese Army (SLA) denied that any casualties had resulted from attacks on the Jabal Hmayyed area.

About an hour earlier, Hizbollah launched an attack using anti-tank rockets and automatic weapons, and claimed to have killed and wounded Israeli soldiers.

The SLA source confirmed the attack but said there were no victims.

Israeli artillery retaliated, firing some 60 shells on the outskirts of several villages in the area, Lebanese police said.

"A house was damaged by the explosion of an Israeli shell at Humin," a police spokesman said.

Rally held to protest occupation

Lebanon on Friday marked the 19th anniversary of Israel's first invasion of the south with a five-minute work stoppage in the capital and protesters burning Israeli flags in the eastern Bekaa Valley.

There also were anti-Israeli rallies and marches across the country and calls on the Jewish state to end its occupation of the South Lebanon border enclave.

President Elias Hrawi accused Israel of undermining the U.S.-sponsored Middle East peace process by refusing to end its occupation of the border strip and by insisting on building Jewish settlements in Arab East Jerusalem.

In a speech, Mr. Hrawi reiterated Lebanon's offer to deploy its small army in the south to stop cross-border guerrilla attacks, but only after an unconditional Israeli withdrawal.

In a symbolic protest against the occupation of the border enclave, Lebanese across the country hung yellow ribbons on their chests or on vehicles.

They staged sit-ins and peace marches, condemning the occupation and demanding the implementation of U.N. Resolution 425, which calls for an unconditional Israeli withdrawal from Lebanese territory.

Israel first invaded South Lebanon in March 14, 1978, to rout Palestinians raiding its northern communities.

Israel invaded the area again in June 1982, evicting the Palestinians but has since been locked in a war of attrition with Hizbollah.

In the southern port city of Tyre, about 300 people marched in support of the anti-Israeli resistance, while in eastern Lebanon's Bekaa Valley, Hizbollah supporters burned Israeli flags.

Iran, Jordan discuss parliament relations

AMMAN (Petra) — An Iranian delegation now on a visit to Jordan has expressed Tehran's desire to further promote its ties with Jordan in all fields and to exchange visits by officials from both sides.

Head of the delegation Ali Rida Batch expressed Iran's views at a meeting Thursday with Speaker of the Lower House of Parliament Sa'd Hayel Srour with whom he discussed prospects of exchanging visits by parliamentarians from the two countries to further enhance bilateral ties.

Mr. Srour expressed hope that the parliaments of the two countries will initiate cooperation based on mutual respect to serve common interests.

He expressed hope that Muslim countries will chart a collective programme for cooperation among their parliaments to serve Islamic interests.

The Iranian delegation, accompanied by Iran's Ambassador to Jordan Mohammad Ali Subhani, also met with Amman Mayor Mamdouh Al Abbadi.

The two sides reviewed cooperation between Amman and Tehran and preparations underway in Tehran for hosting a conference by Islamic capitals and cities scheduled for May.

ICRC donates equipment to Jordan Red Crescent

AMMAN (J.T.) — Within the framework of friendly relations and coordination existing between the International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC) and the Jordan National Red Crescent Society (JRCS), a protocol of cooperation was signed between the two institutions.

According to the protocol, the ICRC delegation will provide financial assistance and equipment to support the JRCS plan to issue a magazine. The equipment include a car and a computer unit to enhance the capabilities of the JRCS in the fields of dissemination and information, an ICRC press release said.

"A JRCS magazine will contribute to increasing knowledge of humanitarian issues existing in Jordan and of JRCS's responses and actions at the national level," said ICRC delegate Jacques de Maio.

JRCS President Mohammad Hadid said: "We are grateful for the ICRC's efforts to disseminate the principles of the international humanitarian law as well as its persistent commitment to the resolutions of various international conferences and the existing cooperation between our two institutions in various fields for the sake of fulfilling the objectives of our movement in ameliorating the suffering of human beings, especially those in the most vulnerable categories such as women and children in service of human dignity."

The protocol was signed by Mr. De Maio, head of the ICRC delegation in Amman, and Dr. Hadid.

British envoy sees prospect of top-level talks on Cyprus

NICOSIA (AP) — The Greek and Turkish Cypriot leaders may meet before the end of June to discuss the reunification of their war-torn island, Britain's special envoy on Cyprus said Friday.

"The question is no longer whether, but when face-to-face negotiations will take place," the envoy, David Hannay, told a news conference following separate meetings with the two leaders.

Greek Cypriot President Glafcos Clerides and Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Denktash last met in late 1994 during a series of inconclusive talks sponsored by the United Nations.

"The chances of getting a settlement are better than they have been for some time in the past," and the desired direct talks can take place before the end of June, Mr. Hannay said.

"The imminence of (direct) negotiations is sharpening the focus of earlier talks leading us to concentrate on main issues and so a lot of ground has been covered," said Mr. Hannay.

His three-day visit here coincided with the launch of a new intensive round of indirect talks conducted by Gustave Feissel, the resident U.N. representative in Cyprus, to arrange a Clerides-Denkash meeting.

Mr. Hannay was to fly to Brussels later Friday to review the latest developments with other foreign envoys involved in the search for a Cyprus settlement.

JORDAN TELEVISION Tel. 773111-19 PROGRAMME TWO

14:05 Cartoon — Mickey & Donald Adventures
14:30 Cartoon — Moomin
15:00 French Programmes
16:00 Gillette World Sport
16:30 Doc — Innovations
17:00 Tilt
17:25 Drama — Blue Heelers
18:00 French Programmes
19:30 News Headlines
19:35 Comedy — Hangin' With Mr. Cooper
20:00 Doc — Magazine-01
20:30 Prison
21:10 Science Fiction — "Time Trax"
22:00 News in English
22:25 Feature Film — "The Blue Lightning"

PRAYER TIMES

04:26 Fajr
05:43 Sunrise/Duha
11:45 Dhuhur
15:09 Asr
17:46 Maghreb
19:03 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swatfeh, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 634590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661656
Terra Sancta Church Tel. 622366

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Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541
Anglican Church Tel. 652826
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751
Amman International Church Tel. 827126
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 845457
The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932
Church of Nazarene Tel. 675691
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295
English-speaking Latin Catholics Parish Tel. 614190

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology
Occasional scattered rainfall is expected with skies cloudy to partly cloudy. Temperatures will drop as relative cold weather conditions will prevail and winds northwesterly moderate to brisk. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.
Min/Max temp.
Amman 04/11
Aqaba 10/20
Deserts 03/13

Jordan Valley 10/19
Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 13, Aqaba 25 Humidity readings: Amman 78 per cent, Aqaba 34 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY
AMMAN:
Dr. Ghaleb Zawaideh 736011
Dr. Jihad Sammour 765018
Dr. Hisham Kan'an 890286
Dr. Khaldoun Asfour 699440
Firas pharmacy 661912
Ferdows pharmacy 778336
Al Asena pharmacy 637055
Nairoutch pharmacy 623672
Al Salam pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shmeisani pharmacy 637660
Najib pharmacy 847632
IRBID:
Dr. Ghazi Ta'ammeh 250080
Al Quds pharmacy (—)
ZARQA:
Dr. Akram Haddad 985550
Khalifeh pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199

Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 617101
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 630321
Hotel Complaints 605800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage Complaints 897467
Amman Municipality Complaints 787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone Repairs 623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power Company 636381
RJ Flight Information 08-53200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32
Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn 644281/6

Akileh Maternity, J. Amn. 642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Malhas, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shmeisani 607071
Shmeisani Hospital 669131
University Hospital 845845
Al-Musharraf Hospital 602240/50
The Islamic, Abdali 666126/37
Al-Ahli, Abdali 664164/6
Italian, Al-Muhajreen 777101/3
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafeh 775111/26
Army, Marka 891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50
Amal Hospital 674155
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 865199
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)83323
Zarqa National Hospital (09)900560
Im Sina Hospital (09)86732
Al Hikam Modern Hospital (09)990990
IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital (02)275555
Greek Catholic Hospital (02)272275
Iba Al Nafees Hospital (02)247100
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111
FOR THE TRAVELLER
23:40 Amsterdam, Beirut (KL)

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport. Tel. (08)53200 where it should always be verified. Information on other flights is obtained on telephone (08) 52700 or (08) 523250.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
08:55 Damascus (RJ)
09:40 Aqaba (add) (RJ)
09:45 New Delhi (RJ)
09:55 Karachi, Dubai (RJ)
10:05 Beirut (RJ)
10:30 Colombo (RJ)
14:45 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
16:20 Cairo (RJ)
17:40 London, Berlin (RJ)
19:35 Vienna (RJ)
05:35 Bangkok (RJ)

Other Flights

1
2:40 Muscat, Abu Dhabi (GF)
15:05 Vienna (OS)
18:15 Dubai, Damascus (EK)
21:00 Paris, Damascus (AF)
22:20 Larnaca (CY)
22:25 Beirut (ME)
22:35 Cairo (MS)
23:40 Amsterdam, Beirut (KL)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
01:00 London, Damascus (BA)
03:45 Rome (AZ)
Royal Wings (RW) Flights
09:20 Aqaba (RW)
18:55 Sharm Al Sheikh (RW)

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in fils per kg.
Apple 700/500
Banana 600/600
Banana (imported) 1000/900
Cabbage 120/50
Carrot 230/180
Cauliflower 200/120
Cucumber (large) 250/140
Cucumber (small) 340/200
Eggplant 240/120
Fava beans 600/300
Garlic 1300/900
Grape fruit 180/120
Lemon 380/250
Marrow (large) 250/120
Marrow (small) 440/260
Onion (green) 220/120
Onion (dry) 300/200
Orange 440/300
Peas 900/600
Pepper (hot) 440/250
Pepper (sweet) 420/220
Potato 330/200
Radish 140/50
Spinach 250/200
String beans 950/600
Tomato 380/220

HUJAZ RAILWAY TRAIN

Dep. Amman 8:00 a.m. every Monday
Arr. Damascus 5:00 p.m. every Monday
Dep. Damascus 7:30 a.m. every Sunday
Arr. Amman 5:00 p.m. every Sunday

Other Flights

00:15 Damascus, Amsterdam (KL)
03:00 Beirut, Athens (OA)
07:00 Beirut (ME)
13:30 Abu Dhabi, Bahrain (GF)
15:50 Bahrain, Madrid (OS)
19:15 Dubai (EK)
23:10 Larnaca (CY)
23:30 Cairo (MS)
23:55 Abu Dhabi, Bahrain (AF)
00:40 Amsterdam (KL)
04:35 Rome (AZ)

Meeting calls for cooperation in addressing refugee plight

By Francesca Ciriaci
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Regional consultations on involuntary mass displacements closed here Thursday with calls for increased cooperation in addressing the plight of refugees and displaced persons.

The two-day Amman meeting was convened by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to lay the foundation for a cooperation mechanism among Central Asia, Southwest Asia, and Middle Eastern (CASWAME) countries.

Though the meeting closed without a final deliberation, ministers and government officials from 13 CASWAME countries agreed that the consultation process should continue, UNHCR Sadako Ogata told a press conference on Thursday.

"Another meeting (on mass displacements) in the CASWAME region will be held before the end of the year," Ms. Ogata announced, adding that regular consultations among directors of refugee bureaus in each country will also take place in the meantime, "to prepare for the (higher-level, next) meeting and share information."

"The governments would like to develop a comprehensive regional approach and exchange legislation and measures" in coping with refugee and displaced persons issues, she said.

Many papers presented in different sessions at the conference highlighted the need for updating national and international legislation in

order to address the humanitarian emergencies of both generally displaced persons as well as returnees and victims of war.

While there is a "firm international legal basis that deals with refugees... there is little in international law" to protect displaced persons and all "different and new forms of forced displacement evolved through the years," HRH Crown Prince Hassan had said Wednesday in a keynote address at the opening session of the conference.

The Crown Prince also called for the drafting of a charter, "a declaration of obligations that deals comprehensively with the varying types of involuntary mass movements of population" in the CASWAME region and the establishment of a non-governmental organisation (NGO) based on the tenet of Al Zakat (alms-giving), one of the five pillars of Islam.

"Within the context of Islam and its teaching, for the past several years Jordan has been calling for an international Zakat offering and support foundation... to assist Muslim refugees for initial humanitarian assistance, repatriation and consequent development," the Prince said, adding that 80 per cent of the world's refugees are Muslim.

Ms. Ogata praised the many proposals forwarded by participants.

"Many proposals were made, including the one of a Muslim foundation of Al Zakat," Ms. Ogata told the press conference.

"But we cannot undertake this series of proposals all at once," she added.

As for the proposal of a regional charter for the CASWAME countries, Ms. Ogata pointed out that such regional documents have already proved successful in creating regional legal frameworks to complement the U.N. system in the Organisation of African States (OAS) and in Latin American countries.

According to UNHCR statistics, there are some 4.5 million refugees and internally displaced persons in the CASWAME region.

The figure does not include the 3.2 million Palestinian refugees who fall under the mandate of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), established in 1949 specifically to address Palestinian refugee issues in Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, the West Bank and Gaza.

The major refugee groups in the CASWAME area are the three million Afghans — who fled their homes following the 1979 Soviet intervention and found asylum in Iran and Pakistan — and 580,000 Iraqis who found asylum in neighbouring countries, mainly Jordan, following the 1990 Gulf War.

In the last five years, UNHCR succeeded in repatriating 1.4 million Iraqis and 3.9 million Afghans.

With a budget of \$1.17 billion and a staff of more than 5,000 persons in 1996, the UNHCR provides assistance worldwide to 13 million refugees, 3.3 million returnees, 4.6 million internally displaced persons and 4.9 million people in refugee-like situations, such as war victims and stateless people.

New Arabic daily to hit newsstands next month

By Amy Henderson
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A new daily, whose publisher says "will revolutionise Jordan's press scene" is scheduled to appear on newsstands in late April. But how far the newspaper can go in competing with three established dailies and more than 20 registered weekly tabloids and remain commercially viable in the country's limited market remains to be seen.

Licensed this week, Al Arab Al Yom (Arabs Today) will be competing for a mainly loyal readership to an already-saturated market by adopting a two-pronged strategy: raising the ceiling of press freedom in reporting and commenting on issues and allocating greater resources to attract qualified manpower and establish bureaux abroad.

Riad Hroub, publisher of Al Arab Al Yom and of Jordan's first weekly tabloid, Shihan, maintains that the mandate of the new daily is to compensate for what he calls the current lacklustre performance by the three pro-establishment dailies, the widest-circulation of which is Al Ra'i, followed by Al Dustour, two newspapers partly owned by the government.

"We are not going to be a typical newspaper," says Dr. Hroub. "We are going to be number one." Some Jordanian journalists and writers agree that Al Arab Al Yom "is going to provide us with something new."

"It's going to be a nice combination — a daily newspaper with the spirit of Shihan," says Al Ra'i writer Fahed Faneh who declined to move his daily column

to the new paper. Shihan was Jordan's first weekly tabloid, established in the mid-eighties. It is renowned for pursuing "the road not taken" in reporting local news, on corruption, government squabbles, crime and other sacred issues.

"They are going to be more aggressive, they will do daring interviews, they've attracted good names of a high calibre and they are going to present a challenge," says Dr. Faneh. "It will be good for journalism and it's going to be very good for the readers."

"They are going to cross lines that we have not been crossing," says an Al Ra'i journalist, in veiled reference to the government's interest in Al Ra'i and Al Dustour, the two main Arabic dailies. "Herein lies the real competition."

The government maintains substantial interest in two local dailies: 40 per cent in Al Dustour and 61 per cent in Al Ra'i, owned by the Social Security Corporation (SSC) and the Investment Corporation, but is supposed to sell its shares soon.

The new newspaper has already come out of the corner swinging, attracting a number of known journalists from the local press corps. Dr. Hroub would not disclose the initial size of the paper's staff, nor the number of journalists he has recruited from local papers — rumoured to be between 60-70 — but he did confirm that the majority has come on board from local papers.

"Locally, we are targeting 'la crème de la crème' of Jordan's press corps," he maintains, although he is understood to have attracted other staff and technicians from abroad as well.

According to Dr. Hroub, the paper will have eight managing editors, headed by leading Al Ra'i columnist Tareq Masarweh, who will serve as editor in chief. For an unspecified reason, Mr. Masarweh's daily column has not appeared in Al Ra'i for some months now.

The editorial staff will include Saleh Qallab (Al Dustour columnist), Taher Adwan (another Al Dustour columnist), Issa Shweibi (editorial writer) and Mohammad Yousef Kawash (Al Dustour editor and columnist).

Dr. Hroub says he was not prepared to name all of his editorial team. However, a source close to Dr. Hroub says its members would also include Hilmi Al Asmar (former editor in chief of the Islamist weekly Al Sabeel), Marwan Hziyin (from Al Aswaq) and Khaled Zubeidi (Al Ra'i economics editor).

Even if the paper is able to maintain a higher ceiling of freedom than established dailies, the battle is far from won. Reader loyalty — or habit — has been proven difficult to break.

"They'll first of all have to prove that they are responsible," said a veteran journalist and publisher. And they have to compete for an established readership — Al Ra'i, for instance, has been like the "daily bread" for a lot of Jordanians.

Al Ra'i circulates approximately 70,000 copies a day, twice as many as Al Aswaq and Al Dustour combined, he says.

"They (Al Ra'i) have ads, they have news, and they have the tradition of obituaries," adds the publisher, who does not want to be identified by name.

Al Ra'i, which was established in the early 70s and has had the widest circulation since then, prints between four and five pages of condolences, and some more of social notices and literally all the advertisements in town, will be difficult to replace as the number one daily.

Additionally, recent studies have shown that newspaper circulation in the country has declined over the past two months due to an increase in newsstand prices, forced by an escalating cost of newsprint on the international market, and government tax on the good.

Dr. Hroub dismisses this as "non-problematic," stating that his paper's management expects to circulate approximately 80,000 copies daily.

"I know on which grounds I am standing," he maintains. "Our experience shows that if a serious, independent newspaper comes to fruition, it will succeed — take, for example, Al Qabas (in Kuwait)."

Al Arab Al Yom — which he expects to be a 64-page, full colour daily — will enjoy considerable financial backing from its parent company, the National House for Press and Media (Dar Al Wataniyyeh), a publishing house with a capital of JD4 million.

Dar Al Wataniyyeh has also purchased Shihan from Tabba'oun Al Arab, a public shareholding, commercial printing enterprise, Tabba'oun Al Arab, owner of Al Farid Distribution (formerly owned by the Hroub family), is a sister company of Dar Al Wataniyyeh, which is owned

along with the Hroub family, by business magnate Khalil Talhouni among others.

Journalists have maintained that extensive resources have already given the paper an edge in recruitment.

According to press sources, Al Arab Al Yom has offered to double salaries of those who come on board. Dr. Hroub did not disclose the salary average at the paper, but said that salaries would be "generous."

The paper is also offering one- to three-year contracts according to the employee's experience and position within the new paper.

Diversity of resources — technical and financial — will give the enterprise enormous leeway to market the paper, utilise state-of-the-art media technology, recruit and train resources, maintain correspondents and open offices in the Arab World and abroad, all of which it intends to do, says Dr. Hroub.

The paper's management already has ambitious plans to open an office in Jerusalem where a Palestine edition will be printed. Dr. Hroub confirms that negotiations "at the highest level" are currently underway, and expects that the Palestine edition will appear "shortly following" the paper's launch in Jordan.

"We are also in the process of appointing correspondents in all Arab countries," Dr. Hroub says, as well as in Europe and North Africa.

'Negotiations are ongoing to modify JPA electoral laws'

By Lola Keffani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — It is unlikely that current negotiations between the Jordanian Pharmacists Association (JPA) and the Bureau for the Interpretation of Laws at the Prime Ministry could materialise into a modern election law before the upcoming April elections, an informed source told the Jordan Times.

The negotiations, which aim to eliminate tedious procedures involved in the JPA elections for president and 10-seat council, started only last week.

Although reasons remain unclear as to why the association started conducting negotiations so late, Abdul Rahim Maaya, a member of the JPA council, told the Jordan Times Wednesday that a temporary election law may well be approved.

"A permanent association electoral law could take up to three months (to be passed)," he added.

According to the Jordanian constitution, the various associations' internal laws must be ratified by Royal Decree.

To rectify the JPA election law, the executive authority should present the amendment to the Lower House where, subsequent to deliberations, the amended law is passed on to the Senate and in its final stages the Royal Decree must

be issued. The current JPA law, which some pharmacists have described as "backward," was first issued in 1972.

It stipulates that members of the assembly should first elect the president of the association and then when all votes are processed, and the result announced, the second stage of election begins.

"It takes almost four hours before the results of the first stage are announced," one pharmacist said, adding that last year he could not practise his right to vote for council members as the whole procedure demanded too much time.

"I drove all the way from Madaba and had to return," he said. "If we could vote for the president and council members simultaneously, things would be facilitated tremendously."

In other associations, two separate ballots must be filled — one for president and one for council members.

Pharmacists, in the 4,000-strong assembly, are also demanding the right to vote in different governorates, as other associations presently do, instead of having to make a bi-annual trip to Amman.

In principle the government is willing to amend the law, another informed source said, adding that it is unclear if an amended law could be issued before April 11, the scheduled election date.

Development projects underway to improve tourism in Petra

By Tanya Hahjouqa
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Scores of development projects aimed to improve tourism, investment and the social conditions of the Petra region are currently underway, according to Petra Regional Council (PRC) officials.

On Jan. 15, Kamel Mahadin assumed his position as PRC general director and is now leading protection and preservation projects in Petra.

According to Dr. Mahadin, a high volume of visitors to Petra could cause extensive damage to the park, so a balance of protection and development is of high priority.

It was not until after the signing of the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty in 1992 that Petra began to draw high numbers of tourists, he said.

"Since peace [was established], visitors have tripled in number — during one day, last April, 4,000 tourists came to the area," he added.

The PRC was established in 1995 to control and protect the site and monitor future developments in the area.

It was a result of the combined efforts of the Petra National Trust (PNT), the Ministry of Tourism, and Royal family members, Dr. Mahadin said.

"The protection of our national heritage is finally being dealt with," PNT Director Ayser Akrawi stated. "The Petra National Trust has been pushing for this all along."

Headed by the Ministry of Tourism, the PRC has been allocated the authority to regulate land use plans and public works projects to ensure the protection of Petra, Dr. Mahadin said. "We must satisfy the needs of development and investment as well as protect Petra's sensitive areas," he added.

Over the next three months, tenders will be offered for projects while



A village in Wadi Mousa will be converted into Hayat Zaman resort (photo by the Petra Regional Council)

other construction will also commence, Dr. Mahadin confirmed.

Projects currently under construction include the JD 3,218 million Wadi Mousa-Taybeh road, a youth club, youth hostel, public hospital and a sewage treatment project, he added.

The entire Wadi Mousa area currently is possessed of no hospital, and one resident expressed her relief at the upcoming project. "We are all so happy about this hospital," she said. "I had to go to Aqaba to give birth to my last child."

Any new land use proposals must first undergo examination by an independent reviewing committee comprised of members from different ministries, the PNT, and engineers, Dr. Mahadin said.

Subsequent to committee approval, the proposal must be publicly disseminated for a two-month period through various media to

Petra and Wadi Mousa locals, he said.

"This is to ensure social justice — we cannot simply protect the environment without respecting the locals," he asserted.

The World Bank is providing \$25 million to finance 10 projects, of which approximately JD 1.2 has been allocated for 1997. This year, projects include JD 75,000 for the landscaping of valleys and caves, JD 380,000 for the development of a traditional souk (market) and JD 500,000 for the creation of an industrial crafts zone, Dr. Mahadin said.

Pending projects include the development and rehabilitation of the old Bij village (in central Wadi Mousa), development of landscapes within archaeological sites, roads, and a rain drainage project, he said. We are giving Wadi Mousa a face lift as we are painting store fronts and beautifying the landscape around the visitor centre

with poplar trees and carobs, he added.

The promotion of tourism, investments, and other income-generating projects are a main priority of the PRC, Dr. Mahadin maintained.

"Petra could draw as many international tourists as the Egyptian pyramids do, which would provide citizens with much needed work," he said.

According to statistics provided by the Ministry of Tourism, in the last five years, JD 50 million has been invested in Petra through the Jordanian private sector.

The past five years have also witnessed the creation of 30 new hotels, including the five star Taybet Zaman, which recently won the Tourism for Tomorrow Global award from British Airways.

Despite the plain amongst tourism entrepreneurs that business in 1996 "was a year to forget," Dr. Mahadin counters that there

was a 22% increase of tourists to Petra in 1995 over the previous year.

However, he lamented a lack of promotion, adding that extensive brochures and an otherwise comprehensive campaign "could lead Petra to be known as the eighth wonder of the world."

"Whatever economic benefits tourism can offer, the most important thing is to protect the delicate site with strict guidelines," he added.

International preservation projects are also underway, such as the joint Jordanian-German \$3.1 million Petra Stone Preservation Project.

The PNT has also completed a study to protect the siq (valley) from flooding, funded by the Swiss government, he said.

The study will be tendered soon, Dr. Mahadin affirmed.

"Once we understand our assets, we can promote them and give Petra [the attention it] deserves," he concluded.

Computer show displays modern technology

By Tanya Hahjouqa
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Fifth Annual American Computer Show, displaying the latest in computer technology, convened here this weekend under the patronage of Their Royal Highnesses Prince Abdullah and Princess Rania Al Abdullah.

Organised by the U.S. embassy's American Business Centre, the show provided the public with the opportunity to view data processing, Internet services, and new computer

hardware and software, organisers said.

The 32 local companies who participated represented U.S. firms in Jordan and showcased American products, one official explained.

"This is the third year that we have participated, and it definitely helps sales," Mazen Tantash, owner of the Tantash Information Systems Group, told the Jordan Times.

Show organisers were optimistic that the event would strengthen U.S.-Jordanian bilateral trade as well as boost public knowledge of available

technology.

"There are so many options available now, you can seek visa information from embassies or listen to the Phantom of the Opera while surfing our local web," Computer Networking Services (CNS) Sales Executive Alia Saleh said.

Plans for a "Made in USA" trade fair exhibition this coming June were also announced at the show, which will showcase American-made products.

What's Going On

FIFTH THEATRE FESTIVAL

* Two plays entitled "The Spider" and "The Sa'lik Revolution" at the Royal Cultural Centre respectively at 7:00 p.m. and 8:30 p.m.

LECTURE

* "The Unpublished Poems of Lorca: Muslim Andalus" by Nadia Chaaban at Instituto Cervantes, Jabal Amman at 6:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

* A UNHCR photo exhibition by Brazilian/French photographer Sebastiao Salgado at Forte Grand Hotel, until March 15.

* Works by Paris-based Syrian artist Ziad Dalloul at Darar Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh, until April 3. Also displaying works by contemporary Arab artists.

* Sculptures by Zaki Sallam at Baladna Art Gallery, Gardens Street (Tel. 6875598), until March 15.

OSCE mediators, Albanian leaders meet as foreigners flee

TIRANA (AFP) — OSCE mediators met with Albania's new prime minister Friday as the country's political leaders ran out of options to quell a national insurrection that has plunged the country into anarchy.

The Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) delegation led by former Austrian Chancellor Franz Vranitzky was holding talks with Bashkim Fino on board an Italian warship in the Adriatic Sea, the Italian Foreign Ministry said.

But OSCE President Niels Helveg Petersen, speaking in Copenhagen, insisted that the Albanian leaders' plea for military intervention to restore order was not an option.

"What would be the goal of this intervention ... with which camp would it side? The situation is chaotic, complex and extremely difficult to control," he said.

Mr. Petersen's comments came after Europe and the U.N. had also ruled out the possibility of intervention.

The U.N. Security Council, in a formal statement adopted by consensus Thursday, limited itself to a call for peace, urging "all concerned to refrain from

hostilities and acts of violence and to cooperate with diplomatic efforts to reach a peaceful solution to the crisis."

The European Union also urged peace but, in a statement issued after a meeting of senior officials on the crisis Thursday, ruled out support for any bid to send in troops.

The evacuation of foreign residents continued apace meanwhile, with Italian helicopters picking up a group of 121 Italians, Russians and Croatians from a Tirana stadium as armed Italian soldiers stood guard.

France evacuated some 69 nationals, mostly embassy staff and dependents, to the port of Durres to be taken by helicopter to the Italian port of Brindisi.

Britain said 131 foreigners, including 65 Britons, had left Durres early Friday bound for Italy, and Greece announced plans to pull out 40 Greek nationals during the day.

Italian authorities said early Friday that a total of 700 foreigners had been evacuated from Albania in the previous 24 hours by Italian air naval forces.

Albania's former defence minister, replaced just two

days ago with the formation of the new national reconciliation government, was among those fleeing the country.

Safet Zhulali and his wife and 14-year-old daughter were among 65 Albanians aboard the Fulgidius cargo ship which docked in Brindisi Friday.

President Sali Berisha's two children, Argita, 19, and Sokol, 25, have already fled to Italy.

Tirana itself was calm but tense early Friday. Some 20 people were injured in shooting incidents overnight, hospital sources said, but there were no deaths.

Bursts of automatic rifle fire could still be heard in the city Friday morning and there were armed residents on the streets.

The scars of tank tracks were visible in the main thoroughfare through the city. At least two tanks patrolled the centre of the capital for several hours late Thursday night, with one taking up position outside Mr. Berisha's office.

Albania's troubles were triggered in January by the collapse of fraudulent investment schemes, wiping out the life savings of many people in Europe's poorest

nation. Weeks of demonstrations for government compensation followed, before southern looted military depots and took over towns in an uprising that spread to the north.

Frantic pleas by Albanian leaders Thursday for international help have essentially been rebuffed.

The European Union called on the Tirana government, political parties and other groups throughout the country to refrain from the use of force.

The only way to overcome the crisis was by restoring order and returning to a proper political and diplomatic process, its statement said, without suggesting how this might be achieved.

The U.N. Security Council, meanwhile, put the ball firmly in Europe's court, saying it "fully supports the diplomatic efforts of the international community, in particular the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the European Union."

The statement made no reference to possible military intervention and stressed political efforts to solve the crisis.



An Italian soldier patrols as evacuees enter an Italian military helicopter on a Tirana soccer stadium Friday. An uneasy calm has settled over the Albanian capital after a night in which rebels fired looted guns (Renter photo)

Clinton's bioethics panel takes up cloning debate

WASHINGTON (R) — President Bill Clinton's prestigious bioethics advisory panel Thursday began its work on the legal and moral dimensions of human cloning research, questions that have come to the fore since scientists in Scotland announced they had cloned a sheep.

Shortly after the world learned last month of Dolly, the cloned sheep, President Clinton banned any efforts to clone humans with federally funded research and asked privately-funded scientists to abide by a voluntary moratorium pending a 90-day review of the issues by the National Bioethics Advisory Commission.

Harold Shapiro, president of Princeton University and chairman of the panel, said cloning posed ethical questions unlike those of past scientific breakthroughs because it dealt with such basic questions about the creation of life.

Mr. Shapiro, told reporters the panel will try to face up to the hard issues in the next 90 days, but he said this may be a topic that society revisits over and over in the years to come.

"I think like all great moral issues there is no permanent consensus. Society can just reach a temporary resolution that seems to make sense in their times, for their feelings," he said.

"What we're supposed to do is to try and think through as carefully as we can what the legal and ethical issues are, to help provide some advice to the president and the Congress about what actions, if any, the federal government or other branches should take," he added.

The meeting was briefly interrupted by four protesters from people for the ethical treatment of animals, who objected to treating animals as "test tubes with tails." One wore what appeared to be a bunny costume and another dressed as a sheep and carried a sign that said "cloning is bad-d."

Lawmakers in the U.S. Congress, and in several other countries around the world, have been contemplating whether or how to regulate human cloning research.

Many scientists and ethicists have urged them not to overreact, saying that while they opposed any attempt to replicate a human being they hoped a backlash would not lead to a ban on cloning-related cellular research that could give

rise to treatments for genetic diseases or cancers.

Mr. Shapiro and the scientists, lawyers and ethicists on the panel noted that one task will be to define very clearly what they mean by cloning. Scientists use the term for procedures ranging from copying a single cell to splitting an embryo to — in Dolly's case — replicating an adult mammal.

Meanwhile, Australian researchers who have achieved the first large-scale cloning of cattle embryos said Friday they hoped to launch commercial cloning within three or four years.

Their success was announced at a time of worldwide debate on the ethics of cloning — especially the idea of human cloning.

Researcher Bernie Harford said the cloning process refined by a team in Melbourne was created solely for use in agriculture.

"Our commercial focus is to produce genetically identical embryos in large numbers, at low cost," Mr. Harford, chief executive of the Geneo's Australia Cooperative, told Reuters. "Our hope would be that we would move into pilot commercial processes in the next three or four years."

Britain's New Scientist magazine reported Thursday that Mr. Harford and a team at Melbourne's Monash University led by Alan Trounson had managed to create more than 400 identical embryos from a single cattle embryo.

In a telephone interview, Mr. Harford would not comment on the possibility of using cloning techniques on humans.

"Our interest is purely agricultural applications," he said. Mr. Harford has worked for five years with Monash University's Institute of Reproduction and Development to create a large number of cloned embryos.

The researchers produce calf embryos using standard test-tube technology and let them grow into a ball of cells known as a blastocyst. They then separate cells out and fuse them with eggs that have had their nucleus removed to create new embryos, which are grown and separated again and again.

At the last count, the team had managed to produce a line of 470 cloned embryos, although none has been implanted into a cow and allowed to grow.

Comet Hale-Bopp puts on bright performance

PARIS (AFP) — Just a year after Hyakutake, another comet, Hale-Bopp, is keeping its appointment to put on a show in Earth's night sky, and it is going to be a "great comet" at the end of March, start of April.

Hale-Bopp is a long-period comet, and won't be coming back for another 2,380 years, according to the calculations made by Don Yeomans of the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California. We shall see.

The new visitor was discovered independently in July 1995 by two American astronomers, Alan Hale and Thomas Bopp, at a time when it was still some 3.4 billion kilometres from Earth and headed for the inner part of the solar system.

Its luminosity has increased rapidly, despite its distance, and it promises to be a very brilliant comet indeed at its closest approach to the sun and the Earth. It was hidden for a while by the sun, or too close to it to be seen, from November to January, but it then reappeared, brighter than ever. Unlike some other comets the last few years, it is keeping its promises.

Hale-Bopp can already be seen with the naked eye and will reach peak brilliance at the end of this month and the start of April, its closest approach to Earth — a mere 195 million kilometres — coming on March 23. At its brightest, it will be of magnitude -1, making it the third-brightest comet since

the year 1400, after Sarabat at -3 in 1729 and the comet of 1577, at -1.8.

It will be a "great comet," says Mr. Yeomans, very bright and observable in the night sky, with an ever-visible tail.

Hale-Bopp is inclined almost 90 degrees to the ecliptic. This means that from our viewpoint, it comes from the south moving towards the sun, nips around it, and then heads back south.

In a few days, it will be observable an hour after sunset in the constellation Lacena, and then in Andromeda, all night until April 10 (in the northern hemisphere). Until now, it has been visible in the southern hemisphere and at low latitudes in the northern hemisphere.

North of the 40th parallel (which runs south of Madrid and Naples), the visitor will be visible all night in late March and early April.

The comet's two tails are quite visible. One of them is the plasma tail, produced by the interaction of comet particles with the solar wind, and the other is the dust tail, resulting from the reflection of sunlight on the dust balle-bops leaves in its wake. The tails are thought to be three million kilometres long.

The comet's nucleus is thought to have a diameter of around 40 kilometres, and the coma one of 100,000 kilometres. Its period of rotation is around 11.5 days, according to the French Pic Du Midi Observatory.

Lake says Chinese missiles threaten U.S.

WASHINGTON (R) — President Bill Clinton's first-term national security adviser, said, "Certainly there is a missile threat from China."

"Certainly while in some areas our interests are similar, in many cases, they are not, and they work in ways that do not serve our interests ... and this is an extremely serious issue."

"Some of their activities on the proliferation side are damaging to our interests abroad in the Middle East and South Asia," he added in testimony before the Senate intelligence committee.

"I think they are real," Mr.

Lake, Mr. Clinton's first-term national security adviser, said, "Certainly there is a missile threat from China."

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"Some of their activities on the proliferation side are damaging to our interests abroad in the Middle East and South Asia," he added in testimony before the Senate intelligence committee.

The United States has voiced concern over Chinese sales of missiles and related technology to Iran and Pakistan, possibly in violation of the missile technology control regime, a 31-nation pact designed to head off missile proliferation.

Mr. Lake was assailed during the session by Republican foes who impugned his integrity, management skills and fitness to head the troubled Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).

The CIA has been rocked by treason in its ranks, frequent changes at the top and scandals in Guatemala and elsewhere.

The session berailed rough sledding for Mr. Lake on the Republican-controlled Senate floor, even assuming that two of the panel's 10 Republicans join the nine Democrats, as seems likely, to recommend confirmation by the full Senate.

Armenian minister voices support for Lebanon

BEIRUT (Agencies) — Armenian Foreign Minister Alexander Arzumanian has expressed his country's support for Lebanese calls that Israel withdraw its troops from South Lebanon.

"Armenia will continue its political and moral support for friendly Lebanon in a settlement of the Middle East problem," Mr. Arzumanian said after a meeting with President Elias Hrawi.

He said Armenia supported the implementation of U.N. Security Council Resolution 425, which calls for the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Lebanese territory.

Israel or its local allies have maintained forces in southern Lebanon since 1978. The so-called "security zone," now manned by some 1,200 Israeli soldiers and 2,500 members of the South Lebanon Army militia, is designed to prevent guerrilla raids on Israel's northern towns.

Mr. Arzumanian arrived in Beirut Thursday as part of a regional tour that also will take him to Jordan and Egypt.

Shortly after his arrival from Syria, Mr. Arzumanian had talks with Foreign Minister Faris Bweiz on bilateral relations and the stalled Arab-Israeli peace negotiations. The two ministers later signed an agreement on customs cooperation.

The last visit to Lebanon by an Armenian foreign minister was in June 1994, when the Armenian embassy was officially opened in Beirut.

Mr. Bweiz said Thursday that Lebanon would open an embassy in Armenia in the near future to strengthen ties between the two countries.

Mr. Bweiz also said his country supported "Armenia's legitimate rights to Nagorno-Karabakh."

Armenian separatists fought a bitter eight-year war against neighbouring Azerbaijan over the disputed enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh, which is mainly populated by Armenians. A tense ceasefire has reigned since May 1994.

Around 200,000 Armenians live in Lebanon, most of whom attained Lebanese citizenship during the French mandate between 1923 and 1943 after fleeing persecution by the Ottoman Empire.

On Wednesday Mr. Arzumanian held talks with Syrian President Hafez Al Assad and Foreign Minister Faruq Al Shara in Damascus, focusing on bilateral relations.

For U.K. Conservatives, it's no longer 'will we lose?' but 'by how much?'

LONDON (AFP) — Britain's Conservatives, at a campaign strategy council in bath, southwestern England, Friday and Saturday, were pondering not so much whether they would lose general elections in six weeks, but by how much.

Officially, said party officials, the council was setting out an electoral strategy of choice: "Stability in an uncertain world" with the Tories, or "plunging into darkness" with Tony Blair's Labour Party, hungry for power after 18 years in the opposition.

The party had spent much of the week working on what has come to be known in British politics as "the fear factor."

Prime Minister John Major Saturday was to address the very party lieutenants already vying to replace him as party leader, and who have been heaping reproach on him in the run-up to the vote expected on May 1.

Mr. Major, trailing far behind Mr. Blair in all polls, has acknowledged the strong probability of a "new labour" victory. Observers say he is looking most of all to avoid an all-out landslide for Labour and limit the magnitude of a Tory drubbing.

Two weeks ago, the day after the Tories took a humiliating, if not unexpected, defeat in the Wirral South by-election, losing a rock-

solid Conservative seat, Mr. Major said: "If public opinion doesn't change (by the general elections), then we will have a Labour government...and a mid-summer's nightmare."

The two latest opinion polls have only added credence to that scenario, showing Labour's already crushing 24-26 point gap was widening, not narrowing as the Tories had hoped it would in the approach to the elections.

In terms of parliamentary seats, under Britain's majority voting system, Labour could wind up with 221 to 289 more seats than the Conservatives, which would be an absolute majority without precedent in this century.

The Tory spin machine has been trying to mask the writing on the wall by dragging out the same bugbears that have successfully kept Labour in the opposition for nearly two decades: Higher taxes, unemployment, collusion with trade unions.

It will boil down to a contest between "tricky Tony" and honest John," said Defence Secretary Michael Portillo.

But observers saw little profit to be gained in the argument.

The polls show Labour has little, or nothing, to worry about, and Blair has been concentrating on the counter-attack.

Labour, which has mod-

ernised and moved sharply toward the centre of the political spectrum under Blair's stewardship, insists it is "taking nothing for granted" in the run-up to the vote.

It also makes clear that "people should know that we will be elected by the center, and we will govern at the centre."

Labour's chances appeared to have been strengthened by the internal Tory battles among Mr. Major's would-be successors.

The Times of London carried an editorial Friday entitled, "the day after defeat," and devoted a half-page to the odds on those Tories snapping at Mr. Major's heels: Home Secretary Michael Howard and Mr. Portillo, 3 to 1, Chancellor of the Exchequer Kenneth Clarke, 12 to 1, Deputy Prime Minister Michael Heseltine, 16 to 1.

Tory Party chairman Brian Mawhinney meanwhile was promising Friday that a "very united message" would emerge from the bath council meeting.

Going into the conference, however, the Tories were still grappling with the "every man for himself" impressions left by remarks attributed to former Tory Premier Margaret Thatcher, unenthusiastically denied by her spokesmen, that "Tony Blair would not let Britain down" if Labour won.

China playwright seeks probe into 1989 crackdown

BEIJING (R) — One of China's leading playwrights said Friday he had called for an investigation to clear the name of late leader Deng Xiaoping of any wrongdoing in the 1989 crackdown on student democracy demonstrations.

Deng, who died on Feb. 19 aged 92, is widely believed to have ordered the army to crush the demonstrations on June 3-4, 1989, resulting in heavy loss of life.

He was the only political leader who could claim total control over the army as well as the party and state.

But the outspoken playwright Wu Zuguang, 79, said he believed Deng was not necessarily to blame.

"Every time people talk about the incident, Deng Xiaoping's name is mentioned. It's unfair to Deng Xiaoping," Mr. Wu said in a telephone interview.

Mr. Wu, who is also a member of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, brought up his call for a probe during group meetings of the government advisory body this week.

He said he hoped the investigation would reverse

the popular belief that Deng ordered the crackdown.

"Deng Xiaoping was not necessarily aware of the entire situation then," Mr. Wu said. "We should clear things up."

Mr. Wu blamed the decision to open fire on unarmed demonstrators on Beijing's disgraced Communist party boss and ex-Mayor Chen Xitong, who has not been seen in public since April 1995.

"It wouldn't be too much to mete out 10 death sentences to Chen Xitong," Mr. Wu said.

Paris store bomb injures one person

PARIS (R) — A parcel bomb exploded in a shop in Paris Thursday, slightly injuring one person, police said.

An unidentified passer-by apparently threw the bomb into the home decoration shop in the Rue Monge in the Latin quarter. It bounced down the stairs into the storeroom in the cellar and exploded.

A store employee, alone in the cellar room, was slightly hurt by the blast, which caused minor dam-

age. The suspected bomber escaped.

"The explosion was pretty strong — the building shook," an employee in a travel agency in the same building said.

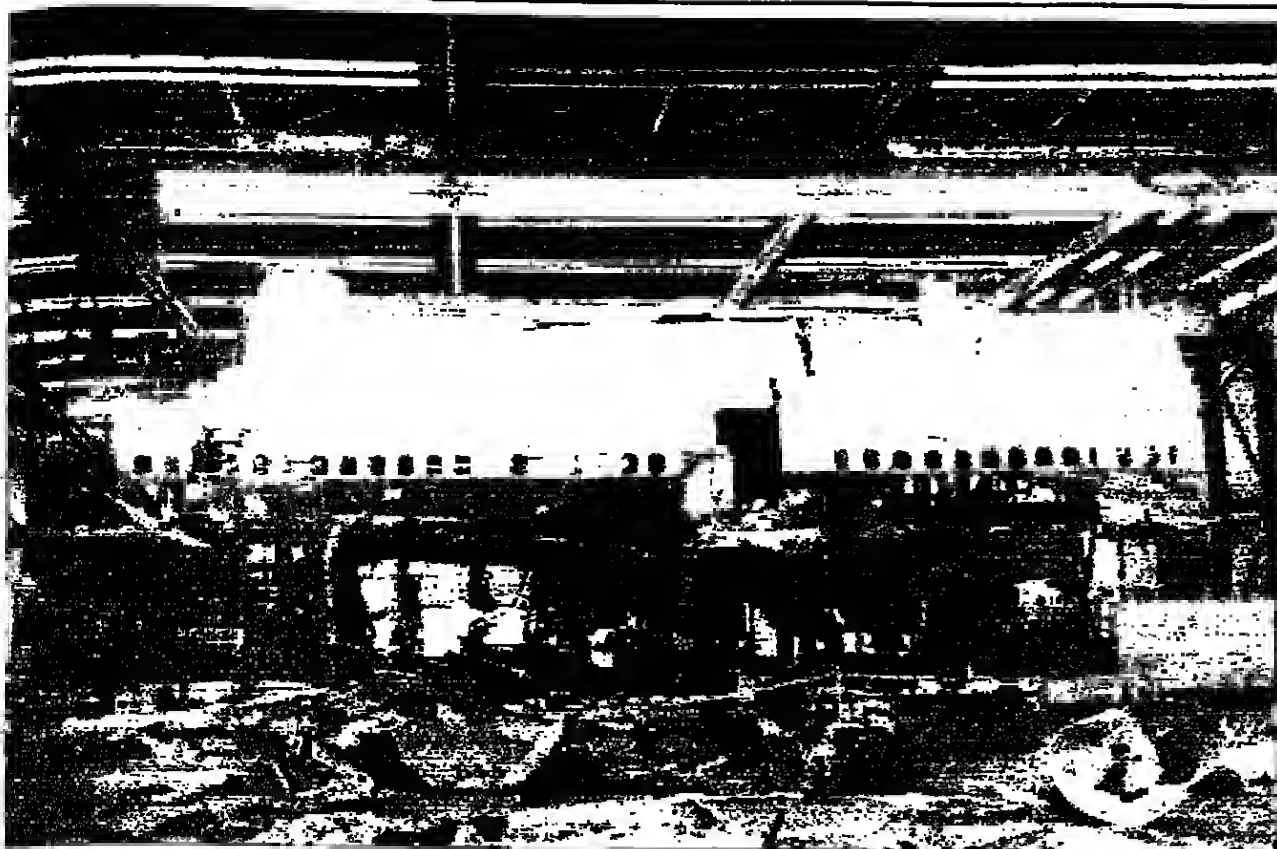
There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the blast, which bore none of the hallmarks of any recent violence in France.

Corsican separatists have set off thousands of small bombs, including five Wednesday, on the Mediterranean island as part of a two-

decade long campaign for more autonomy from mainland France.

Corsican guerrillas usually target public buildings, like town halls or post offices, and normally seek to avoid casualties. They also rarely strike on the mainland.

The most serious recent blast in France was a bomb on an underground train in December that killed four people. Investigators suspect Algerian Muslim extremists were responsible.



The left side of the wreckage of TWA Flight 800 is shown nearly reconstructed in Long Island Friday. The place where the fuel tank was in the five holes right of red scaffolding. Investigators have not yet formally determined the cause of the crash that killed all 228 on board last July (Reuter photo)

U.S. officials angered by Salinger claims

WASHINGTON (R) — U.S. officials reacted angrily Thursday to former presidential spokesman Pierre Salinger's claim that he has proof that a U.S. Navy missile shot down a TWA Jet last year off Long Island, New York.

Defence Secretary William Cohen flatly rejected Mr. Salinger's call for a Pentagon investigation, saying there is "no foundation for such an allegation."

Mr. Salinger, former spokesman for President John F. Kennedy in the 1960s, presented his evidence, mostly radar images, at a Paris news conference and in a detailed article in Paris Match. He demanded a full-scale Pentagon investigation.

He said the images backed his theory that the U.S. Navy accidentally shot down TWA Flight 800 off New York on July 17, killing all 230 people on board.

Mr. Cohen, travelling with President Bill Clinton in North Carolina, told reporters there was no basis for any allegation that a U.S. Navy missile was involved.

"Based on the information that I have there is no basis for such an allegation pertaining to a navy ship or navy missile," Mr. Cohen said. "My understanding is that there has been a very thorough investigation in terms of any navy assets... There was a complete inventory of their missiles or weapons on board and there is no basis, no foundation for such an allegation that a navy missile was involved in this tragedy," Mr. Cohen said.

For the second day in a row, a senior U.S. official denounced Mr. Salinger on television talk shows.

National Transportation and Safety Board Chairman Jim Hall said there was absolutely no evidence to support Mr.

Salinger's story and called him irresponsible for accusing navy personnel of covering up such an accident.

"Right now we have no evidence, no physical evidence that a missile or bomb exploded and caused that accident," he said on the NBC "Today Show."

"We have not seen any missile track," Mr. Hall said. He made similar de-tuals on all the major television networks. "I think what Mr Salinger is saying is that the navy shot the plane down. I think the FBI have looked at that. I think that's wrong," Mr. Hall said.

"As a Vietnam veteran, I think it's just irresponsible even to allege that the men and women in our service, if something like that happened, that there would be some kind of cover-up."

"We have a process in these investigations. We are in the factual stage. If at any time

we have any evidence of criminal activity we will make that known to the FBI," he said.

In a similar round of appearances Wednesday, James Kallstrom, who is directing the investigation for the FBI, made a pre-emptive strike against Mr. Salinger ahead of his news conference.

Mr. Kallstrom said that the FBI had called in every expert it could find to re-view the videotapes of all the available radar images and they could find no evidence of a missile firing.

Mr. Kallstrom, the assistant director of the FBI's New York office said: "There is no missile flying up at this plane on any of the radar tapes... It's just not true," he told NBC.

Mr. Salinger's response: "We have now reached the point where we are totally sure that what we are saying is true."

Martian life could have survived the trip to Earth

WASHINGTON (R) — The meteorite that last year sparked reports of possible life on Mars yielded new evidence Thursday suggesting that microscopic life from the red planet might well have survived the trip to Earth.

In two separate studies published in the journal Science, researchers added new weight to the theory that tiny structures on a grey rock found in Antarctica are tiny fossils of Martian life.

The research does not confirm that life on Mars exists, but discounts scientific sceptics who believe no trace of life could exist in the meteorite because it formed at extremely high temperatures. The new studies suggest the meteorite formed in an environment cool enough to foster life.

Scientists will have no way of actually knowing until the first samples of rock are recovered from Mars around the year 2003, when a robot-rover is expected to be sent to the planet.

"It would have been lovely to take this sample and see little bacteria crawl out of a crack, but that didn't happen," said John Valley of the University of Wisconsin, the leader of one research team.

Instead, Mr. Valley and his colleagues attacked the thermodynamic assumptions of some of the Martian life doubters, who maintained that the kind of material found in the meteorite — officially known as ALH84001 — had to form at temperatures over 650 degrees Celsius.

"What we've shown is that those assumptions are not correct," Mr. Valley said, adding that if the doubters' assumptions were true, Earth's oceans would have long since boiled away at temperatures over 1000 degrees Celsius.

His best guess is that the rock's micro-fossils formed at temperatures below 300 degrees Celsius, and more likely cooler than the boiling point of 100 degrees Celsius, leaving ample

scope for the Martian organisms' survival.

In the second study, researchers reached the same conclusion — that the meteorite formed at cool, life-preserving temperatures — by focusing on the rock's magnetic field.

In addition, the second team, headed by Joseph Kirschvink of the California Institute of Technology, believe they found signs that numerous meteorite strikes on Earth could have brought life to our planet.

"There must have been numerous meteorites capable of carrying life between Earth and Mars," Mr. Kirschvink said in a telephone interview. "We don't know if they did, but at least we've got one stone sitting on a desk that travelled the low-temperature path. It could have done it."

For Michael Meyer, a biologist who studies the possibility of extraterrestrial life for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the idea that life from Mars survived its journey to Earth

was not completely surprising.

Even the arduous year-long interplanetary trip would not necessarily obliterate microscopic traces of life on a meteorite. Mr. Meyer said, and while the heat of entering Earth's atmosphere would be intense, it would be brief that life could survive.

Mr. Meyer posed a potentially more arresting question: "Philosophically, an interesting thing is that some time ago, if something (life from Mars) did land, would we know if it had any effect? We may already have incorporated it."

The National Research Council, which advises National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and other federal agencies, has said the risk of contamination from Martian life samples is remote but not zero, and has suggested that any future samples recovered from Mars be isolated.

Mother Teresa vows to keep ministering to the poor

CALCUTTA, India (R) — Mother Teresa Friday cheerfully handed over leadership of her Roman Catholic order to Sister Nirmala but pledged to carry on her work for the poor and sick.

"I have plenty of work to do," the 86-year-old Nobel Peace Prize winner told a crowd of journalists who filled the courtyard of the headquarters of her Missionaries of Charity in the eastern Indian city of Calcutta.

"I will remain in Calcutta," said Mother Teresa, standing beside her successor on a balcony overlooking the courtyard.

Sister Nirmala, a Hindu Brahmin who converted to Christianity at age 23, was elected by 132 senior nuns Thursday as superior general, succeeding Mother Teresa who had held the post since she founded the Order in 1948.

The Order's new leader humbly paid homage to Mother Teresa, saying she

would depend on the renowned missionary for guidance. "Mother is there to guide us," Sister Nirmala, 63, said.

Asked if she felt like the mission's leader, the Indian-born Sister Nirmala said: "Mother is our foundation and we are all her children. I am not the head of the Order. We are all equal."

The Missionaries of Charity said Thursday that Mother Teresa would retain her name "Mother" but Sister Nirmala, whose parents were from the Hindu kingdom of Nepal, would assume her administrative duties.

Mother Teresa, who had commanded the Order with an iron will for nearly half a century, decided last year to step down after being taken to hospital three times for emergency care, including her second heart operation.

Bedridden for weeks last year, a jovial Mother Teresa said she had since re-

covered. "I am feeling very happy. I'm much better," she said.

Mother Teresa addressed the journalists from a first-floor balcony, flanked by Sister Nirmala and Sister Frederick, an 81-year-old nun who was elected to the second ranking post.

Nuns dressed in the Order's familiar white saris with blue trim crowded behind the three women and thronged surrounding balconies, occasionally clapping and cheering.

Mother Teresa, who spoke quietly into a small microphone, bantered with the press. Asked where the Missionaries of Charity was headed now that there was a new leader, she quipped: "China."

At the end of the 30-minute news conference, Mother Teresa blessed Sister Nirmala by placing her hand on her successor's head.

Sister Nirmala was born a high-caste Hindu in 1934 from a family with its

roots in Nepal — the world's only Hindu kingdom. She was the oldest of 11 children.

Sister Nirmala's deceased father, Mahananda Joshi, served in the military police in the northern Indian state of Bihar, where Mother Teresa's successor was born.

She earned a Master's degree in political science before converting to Catholicism in 1958.

"I heard from God in a hostel in Patna women's college," Sister Nirmala said. "After six years I came to Calcutta and Mother baptised me. When I received the call I was 17. But I joined Missionaries of Charity when I was 23."

The Order's new leader, who wears spectacles and is taller than Mother Teresa, was asked if she had any message to give to the followers of the Missionaries of Charity.

"We remain true and carry forward the task handed down to us," she said.

Zaire rebels: We will finish off the army at Kisangani

GOMA, Zaire (AFP) — Zairean rebels claimed Friday to have cut access roads to Kisangani, the last government military stronghold in the east of the country, and pledged to finish off the army there.

The government, its troops routed in five months of fighting, is vowing that Kisangani will not fall.

On Thursday, government troops were locked in intense fighting with the Tutsi-led rebels northeast of Kisangani as thousands of desperate refugees fled the combat.

An AFP photographer who got to within 500 metres of the government forces' forward position 60 kilometres along the road towards the Ugandan border reported fighting with multiple rocket-launchers and mortars, and said the government troops had pushed the rebels back.

But rebel spokesman Raphael Ghenda told journalists Friday in Goma, the rebel headquarters town on the border with Rwanda: "We're building up the pressure. We have practically blocked all access to the town."

"We're now in a position to finish off this phantom army, which is aided by mercenaries."

The rebels are approaching Kisangani, which is 500 kilometres west of Goma,

from the north, northeast and southeast, and have captured the Zaire River town of Kindu, 450 kilometres to the south, but all territory to the west is still held by government forces.

The rebels have captured a string of towns and occupied at least a fifth of Zaire since going on the offensive in the east last October, and are advancing on several fronts.

They say they have seized Kongolo, in the southeast, on the threshold of diamond-rich eastern Kasai, which fell "practically without a fight," according to Mr. Ghenda.

The rebels, led by a former Marxist, Laurent-Désire Kabila, also appear to be continuing their advance into the rich mining province of Shaba in the south, where they have already captured Kabalo, Manono and Moba.

Like rebel spokesman Raphael Ghenda told journalists Friday in Goma, the rebel headquarters town on the border with Rwanda: "We're building up the pressure. We have practically blocked all access to the town."

"We're now in a position to finish off this phantom army, which is aided by mercenaries."

The rebels are approaching Kisangani, which is 500 kilometres west of Goma,

la, which borders on southern Zaire, has a formerly Marxist government which was long battled by Zairean-backed rebels.

Mr. Kabila, returned to Goma late Thursday after flying off to an unknown destination early in the day.

His aides said their leader "sometimes carries out visits we don't talk about."

Mr. Ghenda said that Mr. Kabila "needs to visit his troops in the liberated zones," but other sources said they believed he had visited Uganda for a secret meeting with President Yoweri Museveni, accused by Kinshasa of sending troops and tanks to aid the rebels.

Some 75,000 Rwandan and Burundian Hutu refugees are meanwhile encamped at Ubundu, 150 kilometres south of Kisangani.

They are receiving relief food which is being flown into Kisangani and then railed down to Ubundu, but are trying to cross to the west bank of the Zaire River, afraid the rebels will kill them.

Most are civilians, but some were members of the Rwandan Hutu militias accused of responsibility for the 1994 genocide in Rwanda.

They fled a previous camp at Tingi-Tingi, southeast of Kisangani, when the rebels converged on that site.

France is meanwhile attempting to persuade European Union (EU) partners to support international intervention in Zaire, but appears to have little prospect of success.

France is sympathetic to the Rwandan refugees and has frequently voiced allegations — so far unconfirmed — that the rebels have massacred thousands of Hutus in their path.

At a meeting in Brussels Thursday, France, which supports the government of Mobutu, said it would continue to draw the attention of its EU partners to the plight of the refugees.

Diplomats from other EU states said they were ready to listen to the French proposals but that any move to send troops into the area would not win approval.

The United States has also ruled out support for a multinational force.

In Geneva, the United Nations said Thursday a U.N. envoy was asking to visit Zaire as soon as possible to verify reports of massacres and mass human rights violations in the war-torn country.

In Kinshasa, opposition newspapers charged Friday that France was preparing to send troops into eastern Zaire from Congo, Zaire's western neighbour and a former French colony, to aid the refugees.

N. Ireland Unionist calls for change in peace talks

WASHINGTON (R) — Northern Ireland Unionist leader David Trimble called for changes in U.S.-mediated peace talks, currently in recess, at a meeting Thursday with a senior State Department official.

The inter-party talks, chaired by former U.S. Senator George Mitchell, were adjourned last week with the province's bitterly divided pro-British Protestant and pro-Irish Roman Catholics still split on the way forward.

"We reviewed the situation and looked forward to the resumption of (the) talks in June," Mr. Trimble said after meeting Under Secretary for Political Affairs Peter Tarnoff, who holds the No. 3 rank in the State Department.

"We expressed the view to him that we felt that there would need to be some changes in terms of the context or the way in which things are being done to avoid the present impasse," Mr. Trimble said.

"We felt that if we returned in June in exactly the same positions as we are at present then the process would have great difficulty in being continued."

Mr. Trimble gave no further details of the changes he wanted to see in the talks, which have been adjourned because of British general elections due by May 22. The Unionists are the leading Protestant party in Northern Ireland.

Currently excluded from the talks is Sinn Féin, political wing of the Irish Republican Army (IRA), because of the IRA's refusal to renew a ceasefire.

Irish politicians of various parties are arriving in Washington to attend a White House reception on next Monday marking St. Patrick's Day.

Mr. Trimble met acting National Security Adviser Samuel Berger and Deputy National Security Adviser James Steinberg at the White House after his visit to the State Department.

He said they had assured him the United States wanted to see the IRA renew its ceasefire in deed as well as word.

Russia signals new flexibility at talks on NATO expansion

MOSCOW (R) — Russia has signalled it was ready to show new flexibility at talks with NATO, saying any agreement mapping out relations with the Western alliance must be binding but need not be approved by national parliaments.

Presidential Press Secretary Sergei Yastrzhembsky said Moscow still firmly opposed NATO's plans to expand eastwards and snuck to demands that any agreement with it must be binding.

But he said Moscow would be ready to consider a host of ways for such an agreement to be formally approved, suggesting it was ready to consider proposals other than its demand that national parliaments should ratify such a document.

"We are urging the need for a binding document," Mr. Yastrzhembsky said in an interview with Ekho Moskvy radio station.

Asked how such an agreement should be confirmed, he said: "One way is to ratify it by the parliaments. Or you can cut a deal at the level of the executive branch."

He referred specifically to the 1975 Helsinki Act establishing a code on human rights, security and the economy which was approved by state or government leaders and was only politically binding.

"We have the 1975 Helsinki Act whose binding nature has not been questioned by anyone yet. I mean there are different options and there is different diplomatic experience," Mr. Yastrzhembsky said.

His comments followed suggestions by NATO diplomats that Russia appears to have dropped its previous demand that any NATO-Russia document should be in the form of a legally-binding treaty rather than a politically-binding commitment.

Meanwhile, The United States assured Poland Thursday that current talks on a NATO-Russia charter would not involve concessions to Moscow on the terms of alliance membership for applicants from Eastern Europe.

Standing alongside visiting Polish Foreign Minister Dariusz Rosati, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright said: "I think it is very wrong to characterise — the NATO-Russia discussions as concessions."

At a Madrid summit in

U.S. offers France NATO Rapid Reaction Force role

BRUSSELS (AFP) — In a bid to smooth a dispute over leadership of NATO's southern command, the United States has proposed that France head a new southern European Rapid Reaction Force within the alliance, diplomatic sources say.

The new military unit, using elements of France's Fast Reaction Force, would be used to handle crises along NATO's southern flank.

Toulouse or Toulon in France are being touted as possible headquarters, as is Florence, Italy, the sources said.

Floated by the Americans a few weeks ago, the idea joins a multitude of others suggested to keep France within the international military organisation and give NATO a greater European identity.

Since it rejoined NATO last year, France has pushed for the southern command, based in Naples, to be placed under European, rather than American command, as at present.

Washington refuses categorically to hand over the reins of the post, which controls the United States' Sixth Fleet, and is charged with looking after developments in the Balkans, the Middle East and the Gulf.

Military observers say the Rapid Reaction Force compromise by itself probably will not be sufficient to sway France. However in combination with other proposals, it may satisfy French demands for greater balance between Europe and the United States in NATO.

July, NATO will invite some former Warsaw pact states to apply to join. To mollify Russia, which opposes NATO expansion, the alliance is meanwhile trying to work out a charter with Moscow on closer relations.

Despite Western pledges that Russia will gain only a voice and not a veto in NATO affairs, the East Europeans are nervous that a

U.S.-Russian summit in Helsinki March 19-20 could lead to a deal that would limit the terms of their membership.

But Ms. Albright, speaking before talks with Mr. Rosati, said the charter "will serve our interests and that of every country in Europe" and insisted there would be no under-the-table deal.

"Every important decision which will be made by NATO's 16 allies is made in full consultations with our partners and there will be nothing about you without you — 'nic o' was bez was'," she said, employing a Polish expression.

The new allies would be full members of NATO "in every sense of the word... There are not going to be any second class citizens in an enlarged NATO," she added.

Although no names have been announced, Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary are widely seen as the leading contenders to be in the first wave of new NATO members.

State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns admitted there was "some degree of anticipation" in Eastern Europe about the Helsinki summit.

But, he told reporters: "No one's going to be threatened by what happens at Helsinki. In fact we think that if we can work well with the Russians it can be a summit that produces a positive outcome for Europe, for all of Europe. There should be no anxiety about this."

Asked if Ms. Albright would give Mr. Rosati assurances on this, Mr. Burns said: "Absolutely."

Deputy Secretary Strobe Talbott met Wednesday with Eastern European ambassadors, apparently to deliver a similar message. Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov is due in Washington Saturday to prepare the Helsinki meeting.

Recent U.S. and Russian statements have suggested that progress is being made on the charter, which would commit the alliance to close consultation with Moscow on European security.

NATO has said it has no plans to station nuclear weapons on the territory of Moscow's former allies. But the Russians also want promises that the alliance will not move its "infrastructure" to the east.

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Keeping alive peace spirit

SOME PEOPLE, especially hard-liners in Israel, are trying to link the tragic incident in Baqoura to the letter His Majesty King Hussein had sent to Prime Minister Netanyahu three days earlier. This linkage cannot, and should not, be made. Linking the words of King Hussein, an architect of the peace process whose sacrifices and commitment to peace cannot be overemphasised, simply defies logic.

The truth of the matter is that while the violence that His Majesty warned about did happen, and more of it can happen, there is no evidence whatsoever to link the heinous crime a Jordanian soldier has committed to the words the King used in addressing Netanyahu. In fact, given the King's clear and unwavering support for peace, nobody can see his words as anything but a call for reinvigorating the search for it. His Majesty's letter stemmed from his concern for a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict. It was a personal letter which Jordan was forced to publish after it was leaked to the Israeli press.

In addressing the speculation about the linkage in an interview with the BBC, HRH Crown Prince Hassan categorically dismissed it as illogical. "This was a crime, and any person who commits such a crime is obviously an unbalanced person," he said. He said in another interview that this crime should not be taken out of its inhumane contexts and linked to political events that need to be addressed rationally and pragmatically.

At the same time, Prince Hassan stressed that the Jordanian army is not politicised. "Our soldiers are disciplined," and are part of an establishment whose record is one of honesty and courage, he said. A senior Israeli official, Finance Minister Dan Meridor, echoed what the King and the Crown Prince said: "It is not the Jordanian government who opened fire, it is a single person, a vile person. This incident should have no bearing on our relationship with Jordan."

In his press conference at the airport, His Majesty said that his record of working towards peace speaks for itself. Jordan's peace treaty with Israel has represented an attempt to transform the old logic of war that dictated actions and positions between the two countries into a new logic of peace.

It is within this new context of peace that the Monarch has expressed to the Israeli prime minister his disappointment and indignation at recent Israeli actions which have been endangering the peace process. The King's letter emphasised peace and not violence. It stressed the peaceful resolution of conflict through confidence building measures and dialogue rather than inflammatory unilateral steps. It needs to be made clear here that Israel cannot make a mockery of peace by speaking its language, yet using the old logic of confrontation to express it.

That letter reflected not only the King's feelings but those of all Jordanians. In that sense, it might be expedient and profitable for Israeli hard-liners to blame the whole of Jordan. But all reasonable people, including many Israelis, realise that the tragic killings are as much condemned here and elsewhere in the Arab World. And as such the crime, whether it is the product of either misdirected motivation or a deranged brain, cannot and should not involve Arab culpability.

At this time of mourning the loss of innocent lives, it may not be appropriate to get into a Byzantine discussion of who is the culprit. Suffice it to say that as Jordan has made an unparalleled effort to stress and reiterate its full commitment to peace, especially at this difficult hour, Israel should do likewise and meet its own commitments.

Thus, Israelis, particularly Likudniks and right-wingers who wrongly believe that all Arabs intend to exterminate all Jews, that the Israelis must choose life or liquidation, must wake up to the reality of the world we live in. As one Israeli analyst said recently, this is a case of wrongly raising one specific incident, an unfortunate attack or killing, like the Baqoura shootings, to the level of principle.

The lesson from the tragic incident is that there is no alternative to peace. The loss of life and the continuing agony of many in the region should push towards one direction: achieving a comprehensive peace that give all peoples of the region, dignity, hope and security.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A WRITER for Al Ra'i commented on a recent meeting, in Bethlehem, of a committee on the displaced Palestinians, formed by representatives of Jordan, Palestine, Egypt and Israel, and said that its failure to reach any decision is due to Israel's unwillingness to recognise the rights of the displaced people to repatriation. Mahmoud Rimawi said that the committee, formed in implementation of a decision taken at the Madrid peace conference to deal with those Palestinians who were forced to leave their homes in the 1967 war, is entrusted with finding a way to facilitate the repatriation process. It is to be noted that the three Arab parties involved in this committee are linked with Israel through peace accords and therefore it is logical to expect that they would have some kind of influence on establishing the Palestinian people's right to return, noted the writer. But unfortunately, the committee's work has achieved nothing so far, following six meetings on this important question, because Israel is adamant in its position of refusing to allow the Palestinians to return, on the one hand, and because there are no clear terms of reference for this committee, except the parties themselves, on the other. The writer said the only solution to this dilemma lies in Israel's withdrawal from all the territories occupied since the 1967 Arab-Israeli war which will make the way clear for the displaced to return home.

Jordanian Perspective

'A day I wish I never lived to see'

By Dr. Musa Keilani

ON THE surface it was the vile act of a mentally unstable individual, but its implications and consequences are far reaching. Every sane Jordanian is shocked and saddened by Thursday's attack, by a Jordanian soldier, on innocent Israeli schoolchildren. There has been never been such an attack in the history of Jordan, and many are left to wonder what is happening in our society. Not even the hardest militant mind could find justification for the attack. It was the most heinous crime ever committed on Jordanian soil, and it is going to live with us for a very long time to come.

But it finds us Jordanians in reversed roles with the Israelis; Israel argued that the Australian who set fire to Aqsa in 1968 was mentally unstable, and so were, according to Israel, Ami Popper who killed seven Palestinians in Tel Aviv in May 1990 and the soldier who opened fire in Hebron's marketplace in January, as well as Baruch Goldstein, who massacred 30 Palestinians at Hebron's Ibrahim Mosque in February 1995.

The family of the Jordanian soldier who attacked the Israeli schoolchildren at Baqoura says he is deranged. We will have to wait until inquiries reveal the truth.

But the attack itself has left in its wake serious political questions.

The timing of the attack was too much of a coincidence to be brushed aside. Everyone knows that the meeting between His Majesty King Hussein and U.S. President Bill Clinton on Tuesday could prove to be a crucial turning point in the peace process. Initial indications that the meeting was called off or at least delayed as a result of the attack seemed to serve the minds of those who did not want that encounter to take place. But, as later reports indicated, the meeting is indeed going ahead and, if anything, His Majesty the King would make the point much more firmly that the present course of the Middle East peace process is in the wrong direction if only because of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's unilateral actions that seem to take the Arabs and Palestinians for a ride rather than towards the goal of just peace in the region.

With all respect to the memory of the innocent schoolchildren who fell in Baqoura Thursday, the attack itself has served to take some pressure off Netanyahu and gave an additional boost to his argument that Israelis have strong and real security reasons to consider while dealing with the Arabs. By extension, it means that Netanyahu's rejection of returning more West Bank territory to the Palestinians is more strengthened; so is his posture in turning down any withdrawal from the Golan Heights.

In sum, if there is any beneficiary from Thursday's attack in Baqoura, it is only Israel. We do not know yet whether that was the objective of the man who pulled the trigger, but we cannot rule it out.

But one finds little logic and sense in the remarks by

some Israeli officials that the King's strong criticism of Netanyahu could have prompted the attack. Such assertions are completely misplaced and can only be described as opportunistic. They are simply aimed at fishing in murky waters. Those who make such comments are dealing severe blows to efforts to resolve the crisis in the peace process and trying to deepen differences between Israel and Jordan over the course of the quest for a just and comprehensive peace in the region. Those who might continue to do so for whatever reason should also remember that if their assertion is, by any stretch of imagination, right, then their criticism of His Majesty could only make things worse. Quite simply, they should remember that if the King's criticism of Israeli policies prompted a Jordanian soldier to open fire on Israelis, then one can only imagine the reaction of the entire Jordanian Armed Forces to anyone who criticises the King. So let us drop the opportunistic rhetoric and look at the situation at hand with a practical eye with a view to resolving the root crisis that the region faces today.

In the meantime, our hearts and minds go out to the families of the children massacred at Baqoura. We wish we could somehow turn the clock back.

His Majesty was speaking for the entire Jordanian family when he said Thursday: "This is a day I wish I never lived to see."

THE WEEK IN PRINT

Just and lasting peace only can guarantee stability in the region

REVIEWED BY
ELIA NASRALLAH

THE ATTACK on a group of Israeli schoolgirls in Baqoura and the deadlocked Middle East peace process, resulting from Israel's decision to build Jewish settlements, acquired prominence in the local daily papers, as did domestic issues.

While condemning the shooting on the Israeli girls Thursday, Al Ra'i Arabic daily said that it is because of lack of a just and lasting peace and the persistence of tension that an atmosphere of hatred and hostility is created in the region. In condemning this evil act, said the paper, one recalls the killing of innocent worshippers at a mosque in Hebron and the other unjustified killings of innocent Palestinians over the past years of occupation.

The paper said what pains us is that the attacker is a soldier in the Jordanian Armed Forces, characterised by high morals and excellent behaviour in war and peace.

The paper said that no one can predict the consequences of continued provocations, violence and aggression.

The killing of seven schoolgirls and the injury of six others should give the parties to the Middle East peace process a good lesson that only a durable and just peace can ensure security for all sides, said a

columnist for Al Ra'i.

Writing under the pen name Meem, the columnist said that Jordan has repeatedly condemned and worked against terrorism of all forms and has proved, by deed rather than word, that it is committed to the peace process and working towards achieving a comprehensive settlement on all tracks.

But, he said, the continued occupation, the acts of terrorism committed by Israel against the Palestinians and the illegal settlements being built on Arab lands should be blamed for the emergence of any acts of tension and violence in our region.

The concerned parties should take a lesson from these events and the Israelis in particular should end their obstinate stand and embark on working for genuine and lasting peace.

Al Dstour daily said in an editorial that all acts of crime and aggression are condemned as crimes against humanity, especially as the killings on Thursday were committed against innocent children.

It is to be regretted, said the paper, that the killings came at the hands of one of the Jordanian soldiers who are known for their national record of bravery, excellent conduct in peace and war and for their strict discipline.

At the same time, said the paper, one should point to the fact that Israeli sol-

diers have been committing more evil acts, killing worshippers in the Ibrahim Mosque in Hebron and opening fire on school children and workers in Palestine.

The paper said that the killing of innocent people is a dastard crime which can end only when a lasting and just peace has been established in this region.

A writer for Al Aswaq daily decried the stand of Arab countries vis-a-vis the continued Israeli aggression and continued construction of Jewish settlements on Arab lands in Palestine.

Rashid Hassan recalled that Arab leaders, at their summit in Cairo, had expressed readiness to take joint action against the Israeli criminal actions and illegal practices, but, he said, faced with Israel's judaisation of the Arab city of Jerusalem, these leaders seem to have retreated from their declared stand and calls for holding another summit to discuss the situation at hand seem to have fallen on deaf ears.

The Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy has truly described the Arabs leaders as only capable of issuing statements of condemnation and not of taking any meaningful action against aggression, said the writer.

One cannot expect any positive action on the part of the Arab countries towards regaining their rights, said the writer,

adding that their weakness can only encourage Israel to commit further atrocities.

Criticising the United States for vetoing a U.N. Security Council resolution that would have condemned Israel's building of settlements,

Mohammed Kawash, a writer for Al Dstour, said that pretending to be against settlements, Washington tends to encourage Israel to its illegal actions rather than exercise pressure on it to halt these measures. This is a double-standard policy which can by no means help end the conflict in this region but rather escalate tension and encourage the Israelis to commit further violations of international rules, he said.

The writer said Washington can by no means take a neutral stand in the Arab-Israeli conflict because of the great influence exercised on the U.S. Congress and the White House by the Zionist lobby in the United States.

He said that if the U.S. continues to encourage Israel to commit such acts, one can only predict further acts of violence in the Middle East.

A writer for Al Aswaq delved on the questions of poverty and unemployment in Jordan and said that even though economic progress in a number of fields has been achieved, it seems to have done nothing

for alleviating unemployment and poverty.

Mohammad Ramahi said that unemployment has been reduced to 13 per cent, but this is a high rate for Jordan, a country which continues to give employment to non-Jordanians and fails to curtail their numbers. No doubt the government realises the danger of these two problems and for this reason it has recently declared plans for implementing what it called a package of measures to secure a social security net, said the writer.

But, he said, without terminating the presence of non-Jordanian workers in the Kingdom and without new investments that can create income-generating projects, these two issues are bound to continue irking the Jordanian society.

Al Dstour daily urged the government to introduce a new, more just and more acceptable election law as part of its ongoing efforts to carry out reforms in the public administration system.

The paper said a modern election law is needed ahead of the expected general elections in the summer, and new rules, empowering the judiciary to supervise the voting and the counting of votes to ensure fair and free elections are necessary.

The paper called on the prime minister to recommend to His Majesty the King that a national com-

mittee, representing all political shades and factions, be formed to help the government and parliament draw up this modern election law, stressing that this measure is one of the priority measures to be taken within the reform programmes.

King Hussein's recent remarks that parliament members be not allowed to serve as ministers as well is expected to bring about a profound change in the political and social systems in the country, said Mohammad Khazroub, a writer for Al Ra'i.

No more will the prime ministers ensure support for their policies with the help of deputies who are members of the cabinet, said the writer who predicted that the coming prime ministers will be facing a real opposition to their plans in parliament.

Describing the separation of powers as an important step towards introducing reforms, the writer said no more will the public witness ministers acting in a way that could be interpreted as part of their election campaigns to win the electorate votes in the general elections.

It is true, said the writer, that the prime minister has succeeded in winning the backing of parliament for his programmes and views, but it is also true that parliament's role has been greatly marginalised in matters of great importance to the nation.

Yes, all children deserve love

To the Editor:

I HAVE read with consideration Maria Saudi's letter "All children need care" (The Jordan Times, March 11, 1997) and would really like to thank her for her kind feelings and dedication which are highly appreciated. I do agree with her that all children need care, but I believe that they need love and dedication which cannot be implanted in the hearts of others since one is born with these attributes.

It is true that orphaned handicapped children were moved from Al Hussein Social Welfare Institute to other centres like "The Jerash Rehabilitation Centre," where they get care and rehabilitation.

The director of this centre was not boasting when he said that for each patient the government spends a monthly amount of JD 250.

Moreover, the handicapped at the centre suffer from severe and multiple disabilities and they get accommodation, care and medication there.

How many countries in the world do provide their handicapped with such assistance?

The minister visited the centre, spent a whole day inspecting every corner of it and initiated immediate action to correct any mistakes at the centre so as to bring it up to an acceptable standard.

Yet what is lacking at this centre, as well as at some other centres, is the awareness of the emotional and psychological needs of the handicapped on the part of the staff.

Moreover, we lack qualified social workers and specialists in the care of the handicapped.

When we do succeed in recruiting some, they are unable to adjust to the work and leave after a day or two. But we are still working to recruit better staff.

The big issue is that we have been unable to attract volunteers with dedicated, humane feelings who could help the orphaned, handicapped or elderly the way Ms. Saudi has been doing with handicapped orphans.

Asking for respect

To the Editor:

At the Ministry of Social Development, we are aware that she still cares for an orphaned handicapped girl at one of the centres until now. We know that she takes her home to spend time with her and we do respect and appreciate this initiative.

We hope to have more volunteers with warm, humane feelings and dedication to work with such underprivileged human beings.

Public Relations
Ministry of Social Development,
Amman.

Asking for respect

To the Editor:

ON MARCH 9 I called Marka Airport to inquire about the time of arrival of a Royal Wings flight coming from Nuweibeh, Egypt. The first time the operator put me on hold and forgot all about me. The second time I dialled, the same operator transferred me to the Maintenance Department which, understandably, could not help me. The third time I asked the operator why he did not transfer me to the right section since it is his job to do so. His answer was: "That is not true, I have transferred you to the Royal Wings, and you are lying."

I told the esteemed civil servant, whose salary comes from the tax payers, that since he is an operator, he needs to work on his rough manners and the way he deals with the public. I also told him that I was going to report his behaviour to his boss. At that instance, he swore at me saying: "Yulan ahuki wa abu yil bedfidi tishkiki ulo." (Damn your father, and damn the father of the one you are going to report me to!)

This is not a creation of my imagination. It happened to

me on Sunday, at 4:30 p.m.

I do think it is high time we looked intently into evaluating the performance of people who have the responsibility of representing the public sector. Since we are talking about change and a new spirit, it is high time that different governmental agencies appraised their employees' performance and ability to serve — yes serve — the public. Perhaps if they were keen on the concept that their job security depends quite significantly on the quality of the service they offer to the public, they might think twice before insulting citizens.

One final word: in spite of the fact that I cherish the memory of my dead father, I am not going to ask for blood money, as would be my right in some of the medieval traditions that still unfortunately abound in our society. I am just asking for some sense of decency and a modicum of respect.

Muna Al Shami
Amman.

Right to live?

To the Editor:

HAVING READ the letter "For half a dinar more" (Jordan Times, March 2, 1997), I would like to point out that anywhere in the world (except in Jordan), any taxi driver charges a "minimum start charge," about the equivalent of JD 1 and often much more than that. It is easy, then, to realise how much a taxi fare from point to point costs outside Jordan.

Maybe that particular taxi driver was rude, but one should be humane and understanding and admit that when he asked for a dinar "to live" too his request was not unreasonable.

N. S. Khoury,
Space Tourism and Travel,
Amman.

Handwritten signature: *Handwritten signature*

Tell Abu Al Kharaz: Understanding early urbanism in the north Jordan Valley

By Rami G. Khouri
Special to the Jordan Times

A SWEDISH team from the University of Göteborg has conducted a seventh season of excavations at Tell Abu Al Kharaz, in the north Jordan Valley, resulting in new information on the indigenous culture in the Bronze and Iron Ages and the discovery of a monumental building on the summit of the site. The team, headed by Dr. Peter Fischer, of the university's classical studies department, has previously uncovered substantial urban remains from three distinct periods — the Early and Late Bronze Ages and the Iron Age — spanning the time period from approximately 3400-600 BC.

Tell Abu Al Kharaz ("Mound of the Father of Beads") flourished in antiquity primarily because of its strategic location in a rich natural environment. Sited near plentiful water from the adjacent Wadi Yabis and bountiful woodlands in its eastern hills, it occupies the flat top of a large natural hill with steep slopes that were easy to defend. The 60-metre-high hill with accumulated debris from ancient towns is partly natural. The site's height and position provide for a panoramic view of the north Jordan Valley; on a clear day, from the site one can see the hills of Nazareth and the area around Tell Al Jidiyah. Due to its strategic position, in ancient times the site controlled the main road through the Jordan Valley and the secondary road along the Wadi Yabis to the highlands to the east. The rulers of the ancient city may have claimed tribute or tax from passing caravans.

The earliest known settlement at the site dates from the Early Bronze Age IB (around 3400-3200 BC, according to Dr. Fischer's Carbon 14 dating of remains found at the site). The one-month season in 1996 revealed scanty domestic remains and waste, situated directly above bedrock. The cumulative evidence from seven seasons of digging now indicates that already in the EBIB period the settlement may have been a walled town. Its material goods included imported Egyptian pottery — the first of its kind ever found in the east or west banks of the valley from this period.

During the EBII period (c. 3150-2800 BC), the settlement at Tell Abu Al Kharaz was protected by a massive city wall. Its stone foundations measured 3-5 metres

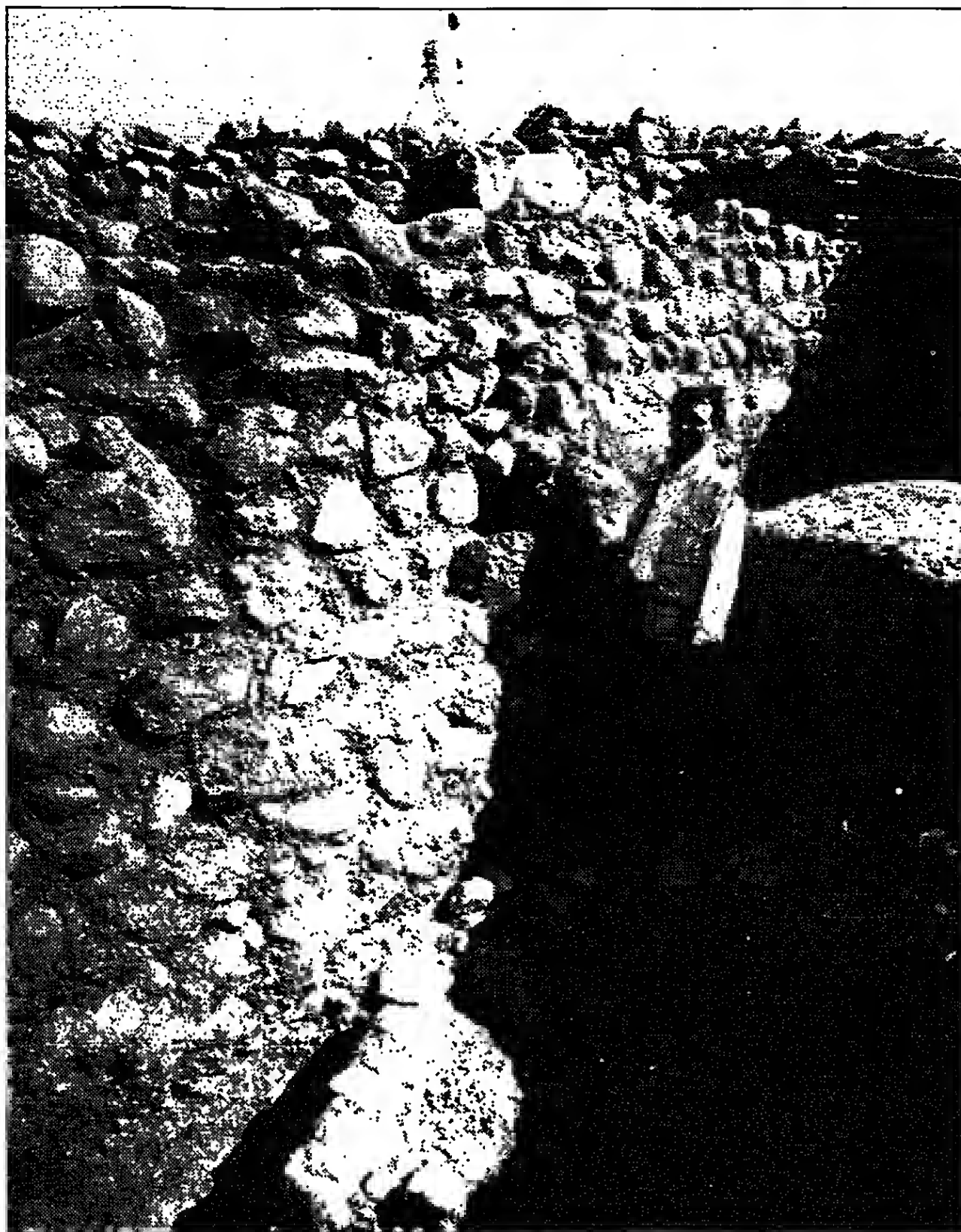
wide and at least four metres high, meaning the mud brick wall above ground probably rose another 3 or 4 metres high. This is thought to be the only excavated wall of its kind from the EBII period in Jordan, and maybe in all of Palestine as well.

Numerous test trenches have revealed parts of the EBII town, which covered an area of 3-4 hectares. Inside the town were houses made of mud brick walls on stone foundations. The 1996 excavation uncovered more rooms, including one that was undisturbed by settlements in later periods. It measures some four metres on each side, with walls made of mud bricks resting on stone foundations, and still preserved to a height of 1.5 metres.

The town's inhabitants were quite well off, to judge by their pottery, jewellery, beads, shells, mace heads, pins and metal weapons made of a copper alloy and the large amount of stored grain found in the ruins. EBII material cultural remains also include "Abydos ware" (pottery produced in northern Palestine and exported to Egypt, now named metallic burnished ware by Dr. Fischer), and many large, complete storage jars measuring a metre high. About a cubic metre of grain was recovered from some of the storage jars, including acorn and different types of barley, along with dried figs, raisins and legumes.

Also recovered last season were a mace head, a unique sickle of wood with attached flint blades, an animal figurine depicting a long, tailed creature, and a line of nine spindle whorls made of basalt and limestone; these fell from a loom during a fire, and the loom remains, from circa 3200-3100 BC, are the oldest ever discovered in Palestine/Jordan. Many bronze, stone and bone tools were found, including an awl and a knife.

After the EBII town, the site appears to have been abandoned for a very long time — about 1,300 years. This long break, from c.2800 to 1500 BC, is surprising because nearby sites such as Pella and Tell Deir Alla have substantial town remains from this time, especially from the Middle Bronze period. The 1996 work failed to turn up evidence of any Middle Bronze age remains other than some transitional material from the late Middle Bronze or early Late Bronze Age.



Dr. Fischer stands on the remains of the Early Bronze I wall, and points to the much larger Early Bronze II wall

The next known occupation phase at the site was in the Late Bronze I period, starting around 1550 BC — this was contemporaneous with the first ruler of the 18th Dynasty in Egypt, Ahmose, who expelled the Asiatic Hyksos people from Egypt. The town had become smaller since the Early Bronze Age, and the city wall changed from a solid, massive structure into a casemate wall (two parallel stone walls with side walls in between them forming rooms within the wall). Some mud

brick sections of the city wall still stand on their stone foundations. Last year's work revealed scanty LB architecture next to the casemate wall, comprising parts of a domestic structure (living and storage rooms) and a circular grain silo measuring one metre deep and 1.5 metres in diameter).

Previous seasons had revealed a Late Bronze Age industrial complex comprising four tawabeen (clay ovens) and a small, 5x6-metre temple with many clay

pots lying in their original place on an ancient altar (dated to just after 1400 BC).

Small finds from this period include excellently manufactured and very well preserved pottery (chocolate-on-white and white and burnished bichrome) that parallels pottery found in Palestine. Spectrographic analyses of the clay reveal that these vessels were produced in the Jordan Valley, rather than elsewhere, as previously thought. One of the most interesting discoveries of the 1996 season was a

cache of unfired pottery and a potter's wheel, proving that pottery, and very likely chocolate-on-white ware, was produced at Tell Abu Al Kharaz during the Late Bronze I period. A beautiful little stamp seal made of white alabaster carries the design of two antelopes leaning against a tree. A hole in it suggests it was worn like a necklace and used as a personal seal. These Late Bronze Age I remains may represent the first of their kind found in the Jordan Valley.

The next major town at Tell Abu Al Kharaz dates from the Iron Age, when the people's economic status seems to have declined somewhat. The Iron Age city wall was partly uncovered last season, while architectural remains include towers and well built houses. More domestic pottery and tools used for daily life were excavated last year. Previous seasons had shown that the Iron Age inhabitants of the site imported goods from the eastern Mediterranean region.

Substantial summit building

On the summit of the tell, Dr. Fischer had previously observed traces of a large building and collected surface pottery from more recent periods: the Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine and Islamic periods. The latest excavation on the summit revealed parts of a large and impressive building, measuring 9.5 metres north/south and at least 10.5 metres east/west. It had a solid stone foundation of well fitting ashlar blocks, and the entire building was covered with a white lime mortar. The massive walls are 1.5 metres thick. The two rooms exposed in 1996 have no entrances, suggesting that they were basement rooms entered through ladders.

Dr. Fischer told the Jordan Times in a recent interview that there is not enough evidence yet to date the building or designate its function. Two possibilities are that it served as a palace or for fortification purposes.

The ashlar construction technique was used in the region from the Late Bronze Age to Roman times, and the pottery inside the rooms is almost exclusively from the Iron I/II period (the early centuries of the 1st millennium BC). An ostrakon in one of the rooms has an inscription in Aramaic, resembling the longer texts from Tell Deir Alla in the central Jordan Valley. The pottery and script suggest a likely Iron Age date for the complex. The pottery outside the building dates mainly from the Late Roman period, probably indicating a later re-use of the building. Further excavations will help to date the building more precisely.

The material well-being and duration of the Bronze and Iron Age towns at Tell Abu Al Kharaz speak much about ancient wealth in Jordanian urbanism. This wealth reflected extensive trading in the east Mediterranean

region, but was built on a solid foundation of local agriculture and cattle-breeding. Wheat, sheep and goat formed the backbone of the economy in the Bronze Age, while in the Iron Age cattle became relatively more important and cereals less important. In both periods, the residents used barley, wheat, lentil, broad beans, flax, fig, olive and grape. Animal remains found at the site included those of sheep, goat, cattle, pig, deer, gazelle, dog, rodents, cat, fox, brown bear and hippopotamus.

Surplus grain produced in the Jordan Valley financed imported goods from Egypt, Cyprus, Syria and Greece. Why the town became smaller over time remains to be determined. It could be due to climatic changes, degradation of local soil or water resources, or deteriorating political conditions.

Scholars continue to debate the ancient identification of Tell Abu Al Kharaz; two commonly suggested identifications are with the biblical cities of Jabesh-Gilead, though the nearby Tell Maqlub may also contain the remains of this ancient town.

The excavators and the Department of Antiquities have started to consolidate some of the exposed ancient walls, especially the important Early Bronze city wall and the Late Bronze casemate defence system. Walls were carefully cleaned and consolidated with a mixture of local sand, lime and white cement that was softer than the original limestone with which the original walls were built. Such reconstruction preserves important historical structures and also enriches the tourist potential of the region.

The excavations at Tell Abu Al Kharaz have been financed primarily by the Swedish government via the former Swedish Board for Investment and Technical Support (now SIDA), and staff and logistical support has also been given by the Jordanian Department of Antiquities and Yarmouk University (represented by Dr. Zeidan Kafafi). The dig is affiliated with Göteborg University in Sweden and has received assistance in Amman from the American Center for Oriental Research. The Swedish Academy will contribute to the next season's excavation.

King to visit families

(Continued from page 1)

defence minister, is to supervise the work of a Jordanian military commission urgently sent to investigate the incident, they said.

Crown Prince Hassan and Mr. Kabarti went to the site of the shooting and to a hospital in the town of Shuna where the wounded Israelis were taken.

Following is an official Royal Palace statement issued from Madrid, on Thursday, where the King was visiting before cutting short his trip.

"His Majesty King Hussein made a telephone call this morning to President Weizman, the president of the state of Israel. His Majesty expressed his feelings of shock, pain and anger at the murder committed earlier this morning on Jordanian territory which resulted in the death of a number of innocent and unarmed Israeli guests to Jordan, most of whom were children students.

"His Majesty emphasised in this telephone conversation that he considers those treacherous bullets to have been directed against him and his sons and daughters in his own home, the home of all Jordanians, as well as the military honour of those who bear arms in the Jordanian Armed Forces.

"His Majesty has decided to delay his visit to the U.S. and to return immediately to Amman."

The King told journalists in Madrid that he did not think it was his strong message to Mr. Netanyahu and comments in a CNN interview as well as an Egyptian magazine warning of violence were behind the attack.

"It was fully in my responsibility to warn that we have come too far," he said of the letter to Mr. Netanyahu.

The King said he had never thought his words would be taken that way. And that he felt the peace he had worked for his whole life.

King Hussein said he was angered by the killings and expressed his "sorrow at the tragic loss of life of the innocent."

"The attack placed our country in a difficult place — for me, my children, the people of Jordan and the Jordan army," said the King. "We should never let a minority of extremists dictate their agenda on us. The peace process is facing a difficult moment. I'll do everything I can to leave behind us peace."

President Weizman said on Friday he was confident the attack would not harm relations between Jordan

and the Jewish state.

"I am convinced that it was an isolated act committed by a bastard and I am convinced that it will not affect the relations between our two countries," Mr. Weizman said.

Mr. Weizman paid tribute to King Hussein for his condemnation of the attack on the school.

"The King, who interrupted a trip abroad after this killing, has done the impossible to disassociate his country from such an act," he said on Israel Radio.

U.S. President Bill Clinton condemned the shooting as "inexcusable and tragic" but said there was no evidence the killings were politically motivated and appealed for calm in the region.

"Today along the normally peaceful border between Israel and Jordan we have seen an inexcusable and tragic act of violence against schoolchildren. I condemn this act in the strongest possible terms," Mr. Clinton said.

"There is no evidence at this moment that this terrible incident is related to the tensions in the area over the issues," he said as he left the White House for a visit to North Carolina.

"For all we know this may have been just a deranged person," he said. "We have no reason to believe this was politically

motivated by any larger group or anything. We just don't know that."

A White House spokeswoman said Mr. Clinton spoke to Mr. Netanyahu from Air Force One for 10 minutes to convey his condolences over the killings.

Mr. Clinton said no one should jump to any conclusions about the shooting "given King Hussein and Jordan's long record of reaching for peace and reconciliation," and he urged leaders in the region to redouble their efforts for peace.

"The leaders in the region must work hard to calm the situation, to do everything in their power to create an atmosphere in which violence is rejected rather than embraced. We call on the leaders ... to reject violence, to redouble their efforts toward peace and reconciliation," he said.

Defence Secretary William Cohen, travelling with Mr. Clinton to North Carolina, suggested that the killings might generate further resistance to the peace process within Israel.

"When something like this occurs it's going to create even more opposition within the state of Israel in terms of moving forward," Mr. Cohen said, adding: "I think it'll be a temporary setback but we will proceed along the path of peace."

Attack an isolated incident and does not reflect Jordan's policy

(Continued from page 1)

Asked whether the attack will affect the peace process, he said there have been ups and downs in the process for some period of time. But he said the world and the people on both sides want the peace. He expressed hope that the two sides will maintain their contacts on the basis of the peace treaty.

In an interview with CNN on Thursday, Prince Hassan was asked about his contacts with Israel over the incident.

He said that following the incident he met with Israeli Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai and His Majesty King Hussein talked to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and that the Israelis and the Jordanians are cooperating and in fact Jordanian blood donors were coming forward to donate blood to the victims and this was a show of concern and goodwill.

He said the interrogation and investigation was on going. "We have no indication of any outside connection or any political motivation."

Responding to a question on the letter which the King sent to Mr. Netanyahu, Prince Hassan said: "The letter was intended to express our concern for peace and to invite him for further discussion, but with all due respect to the media I think it was its leak which led to publication. His Majesty, everyone knows, is an architect of the peace process."

"We will continue to do what

we have tried to do over many years to maintain security on the borders and we have to continue to diffuse tension that might exist," said the Prince in another interview.

He said: "Unless we engage in consultations and move through this crisis it would be very difficult to continue to serve the peace honestly and fully but we are certainly going to do our share."

In response to a question on Jordanian-Palestinian coordination, Prince Hassan stressed Jordan's full support for Palestinian rights and voiced total rejection of the Israeli policy to change the facts on the ground in Arab East Jerusalem.

The Crown Prince praised Jordanian-Palestinian coordination, saying that it was a must in the present circumstances noting that future Jordanian-Palestinian relations will be determined in due course.

The Crown Prince said Jordan was the Arab lung of Palestine, and called for lifting restrictions imposed by Israel on the Palestinian economy, which, he said, depends 70 per cent on the Israeli economy.

Prince Hassan said all Jordanians, even the staunchest opponents of the peace treaty, condemn the killing of children and civilians, "for this is the Arab and Islamic traditions and values."

Crown Prince Hassan stressed

the need for overcoming all obstacles facing the Middle East peace process, to achieve peace for all the Arab and Israeli people who believe in peace.

In an interview with Radio Israel, the Crown Prince said conflict in the region is not only between the Arabs and Israel but also between those who believe in peace, justice and human dignity and those who do not in both the Arab and Israeli camps.

Prince Hassan stressed the need for addressing such delicate issues as Jerusalem and refugees properly and dealing with them in a responsible manner.

Prince Hassan called for intensifying efforts to achieve a just, comprehensive and lasting peace which can ensure the rights and dignity of all the parties concerned.

The establishment of a just and lasting peace is essential for preventing the recurrence of criminal acts, the Crown Prince said.

Prince Hassan expressed deep sorrow and pain for Thursday's crime in the North Jordan Valley, which claimed the lives of seven Israeli girls and left others wounded.

"Neither our norms nor our conscience condones such a crime," he said and expressed his heartfelt condolences, and those of all Jordanians who believe in peace to the Israeli people and to the bereaved families.

"Jordan is concerned about the safety of each visitor and each guest, and all Jordanians con-

demn this incident because nobody accepts or condones attacks against children and civilians," the Crown Prince said in answer to a question.

Prince Hassan stressed what King Hussein said Thursday at a press conference at Amman airport upon his arrival from Madrid after cutting short his visit to Spain that the attack was alien to the Jordanian people's manners and traditions.

Prince Hassan said the Jordanian Armed Forces' record was one of honour and courage in times of war as well as peace.

Prince Hassan said the perpetrator of Thursday's crime bears the direct responsibility for his crime. The Crown Prince stressed Jordan's principled stand which condemns all kinds of terrorism.

Prince Hassan said this isolated incident does not reflect Jordan's official policy, nor the manners of the Jordanian Armed Forces.

"It cannot be said that this isolated incident reflects Jordan's official policy, nor the manners of the Jordanian army, just as it cannot be said that crimes committed by Israeli soldiers reflect the official Israeli policy nor the institution they are working for," he said.

Prince Hassan said dealing with immediate and daily issues, should not preclude the realisation of the basic and strategic goal of achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in accordance with the basic principles of Madrid peace conference.

Shair stresses need to reverse 'traditional way' of attracting investors

Major Swiss bank to offer its clients investment in eight Jordanian firms

By Ghaila Alul
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Union Bank of Switzerland (UBS) has identified eight Jordanian companies as potential firms for foreign investments, according to Amman Financial Market (AFM) Director General Wahib Shair.

Mr. Shair told the Jordan Times Thursday that the UBS will hold a conference in London on May 15 in an effort to promote the eight companies among 60 of UBS clients who represent investment institutions in Europe.

Mr. Shair added that the companies, in which the government holds large stakes, include the Jordan Phosphate Mines Company, the Arab Potash Company, the Jordan Cement Factories Company, the Dar Al Dawaa Development and Investment Company, the Housing Bank, the Jordan National Bank, the National Electricity Company and

Jordan Telecommunications Company.

He said the conference will discuss the general activities and performance of these companies, which are currently being studied by UBS analysts.

A senior Jordanian government official is expected to attend the conference and confirm Jordan's commitment to the economic reform programme which was started in 1989, said Mr. Shair.

"I'm happy to say that I have agreed with Adel Quda, head of the privatisation technical unit to coordinate efforts to ensure the highest degree of success for this conference," asserted Mr. Shair.

He told the Jordan Times that a UBS delegation was in Jordan on a two-day visit to prepare for the conference, adding that the delegation also met with several Jordanian ministers and officials.

This visit "confirms their seriousness in pursuing the

proposed event," Mr. Shair said.

Mr. Shair reviewed the investment climate in Jordan and said that during the past 12 years the country has been able to attract an increased number of foreign investors, who at present total 62 investors.

Although non-Arab investments in Jordanian stocks represent two per cent of the market, they account between seven per cent to eight per cent of the volume of trading, said Mr. Shair.

"This means that active investors (non-Jordanians) review their portfolios, a behaviour different from that of Jordanian investors who buy stocks and keep them," Mr. Shair explained.

In this regard, Mr. Shair indicated, the AFM is conducting a study to analyse the investment behaviour pattern of Jordanians and non-Jordanians alike.

The study should be a tool for Jordanians to manage their share portfolios,

he added.

He noted that in 1993, Jordan missed many investment opportunities as foreign investors were required to obtain a prior approval for investment from the Prime Ministry.

"This procedure discouraged investors as the ministry was slow in processing applications," Mr. Shair added.

"But, with changes in the law brought about by the Middle East and North Africa economic summit (MENA), the need for prior approval from the Prime Ministry was cancelled," he said.

He stressed the importance of reversing "the traditional way" of attracting foreign investments, to a new approach of "meeting investors, showing them we are interested, listening to their views and communicating their ideas to the government," Mr. Shair said.

Palestinian firms aim to enter Gulf market with Jerusalem '97

DUBAI (AFP) — Some 70 Palestinian companies from the self-rule territories are to hold a trade exhibition opening here Sunday aimed at breaking into the lucrative Gulf market and attracting investments.

"We're seeking access to the Gulf markets to overcome Israel's blockade of the autonomous areas which is aggravating the economic and social situation in the territories," said Salim Abu Sultan, the Palestinian consul in Dubai.

The companies taking part in the four-day exhibition want "to show that their goods are just as competitive as those of other countries."

Access to the Arab Gulf market would "breath life

into the fledgling Palestinian economy," Mr. Abu Sultan told AFP ahead of the fair at the Chamber of Commerce in Dubai, the trading hub of the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

On display at the Jerusalem '97 exhibition will be marble, computers, pharmaceutical goods, cosmetics, food products and construction materials. Palestinian firms aim to impress with the "variety and quality" of their goods.

"If this experiment works, Palestinian firms will target other Arab states but the priority is Dubai because of its position as the region's commercial centre and the support of its leaders for our initiative," the consul said.

Palestinian industry, dependent on the Israeli market, has been hit hard by Israel's frequent closures of the territories, particularly after a wave of suicide bombings in February and March 1996.

The Palestinian economy minister, Maher Al Masri, will be at the Dubai exhibition for a seminar on investment opportunities for Gulf businessmen and the 80,000 Palestinians working in the UAE.

Wealthy Palestinians abroad have so far steered clear of major investments in self-rule areas of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, according to an Arab study released last December in Cairo.

HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR FRIDAY, MARCH 15, 1997

By Thomas S. Pierson,
Astrologer, Carroll
Righter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Benefits from a distance are not forthcoming today, so handle local matters which you feel are more important. Go through with tonight's plans and thereby you can make your career activities more successful.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Don't overspend today for pleasure or you could find yourself short of funds if the situation develops for you to have some extra money. Go after whatever wholesome and delightful. Take care of your health in the days ahead.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Remain neutral today if a disagreement starts between a loved one and an outsider and it will soon blow over. Later this evening you can meet with a knowledgeable person and discuss your career activities with him or her.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Don't forget to answer today a message from a good friend which concerns your career activities. Enjoy a hobby later this evening and you can relieve the stress created from your business activities or you could explode.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Get into practical situations today which have to be righted. A wise person could give you advice later which would be well to follow and thereby make the projects which you are involved much more simplified.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Go after your personal desires today and get in touch with your close friends and show affection for them. Later this evening will be good to go out with your mate and have a romantic time together and have some fun.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) You are able to get into private matters today which are important to you and make your efforts more productive. Your closest loved ones will be very helpful for your career activities, so make the best of a good situation.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Contact good friends today who can assist you in gaining personal wishes. Plan a campaign with your loved ones to seek out pleasures in the days ahead, which will make your lives more enjoyable to everyone.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Your ideas are poor and your judgement is not up to par today, so rely on advice given by bigwigs who have the patience to wait until another time. Later this evening will make your tasks much more successful.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Have conversations today with those whose views are different from your own, thereby you can avoid any differences of opinion. Steer clear later this evening of a jealous person who is only out for him or herself, so be alert.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) You can come to a better understanding with your fellow associate if you are with that person today. Later this evening will be good for you to meet with those in authority and submit a plan of action which is successful.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Take some time today to comprehend the views of a fellow associate, and make sure you are clear on the circumstances. Give more support to your loved ones and get ahead with his or her assistance.

Birthingstone of March:
Aquamarine — Jasper.

Japan's current account surplus down 30.9 per cent

TOKYO (AFP) — Japan's current account surplus dropped by nearly one-third in 1996, dragged down by higher crude oil prices and the largest services deficit in more than a decade, the finance ministry has said.

The ministry said the surplus, measuring the flow of goods and services as well as investment income and other monetary transfers, shrank 30.9 per cent from a year earlier to 7,180.6 billion yen (\$59 billion) in 1996.

A ministry official said the strong rise in crude oil imports accounted for part of the decline in the current account surplus, with the rising services deficit another key factor.

The services deficit grew 25.7 per cent from the previous year to 6,776 billion yen, with the capital and financial accounts showing an outflow of 3,223.1 billion yen, down 48.6 per

cent. Crude oil imports rose 29.2 per cent in value terms, reflecting higher oil prices, which rose 13.1 per cent year-on-year, the ministry said.

Imports of office equipment such as personal computers, mainly from the United States, continued to grow, rising 38.3 per cent by value year-on-year, the ministry said.

Japan's auto exports rose for the first time since 1992, up 10.7 per cent in value terms year on year. Auto exports recorded a double-digit fall each year between 1992 and 1995, the ministry said.

In volume terms, auto exports rose for the first time since 1990, when exports were steady.

Exports of office equipment reflected the rise of personal computer exports, which rose 10.4 per cent in value terms, the ministry said, although exports of

audio equipment fell 14.5 per cent, reflecting the shift of production offshore.

"As the real effects of the yen's decline against the dollar started to emerge, exports are now on the rise, and if the yen remains weak, the surplus will continue widening," said Aisushi Takeda of DKB Research Institute.

"This may not please the United States, but is good for Japan's economy," Mr. Takeda said.

"With domestic consumption expected to stay weak, Japan has to depend on external demand, at least for the time being," he added.

In December alone, the surplus contracted 23.1 per cent from a year earlier to \$20.7 billion yen, compared with 664.1 billion yen in November.

It was the third straight yearly decline and the second lowest since 1985, when data began to be col-

lected under the present statistical formula, the ministry said. The lowest was 6,473.6 billion yen in 1992.

In December, the trade surplus was down 20.0 per cent to 1,046.6 billion yen, with exports increasing 4.9 per cent to 4,066.2 billion yen and imports expanding 17.6 per cent to 3,019.6 billion yen.

For 1996, the trade surplus declined 26.2 per cent to 9,115.2 billion yen. Exports grew 8.2 per cent from a year earlier to 43,571.5 billion yen as imports expanded by a faster 23.4 per cent to reach 34,456.3 billion yen.

The current account surplus in December fell year-on-year for the 16th consecutive month, the ministry said, falling to the third lowest level for December since 1985.

"Looking at the recent upturn of imports, the current account surplus will continue to show a declining trend in the coming months," an official said. The official attributed the fall in the surplus to higher crude oil imports, which were up 59.4 per cent in value terms due to higher oil prices.

REUTERS

REUTERS

The Business of Information

| Major Currencies & Cross Rates | | Prices as at 14/03/97 20:29 | |
|--------------------------------|--------|-----------------------------|--------|
| Currency | USD | DEM | GBP |
| US Dollar | 1.0000 | 0.6345 | 0.7763 |
| DE Mark | 0.6345 | 1.0000 | 1.2763 |
| GB Sterling | 0.7763 | 1.5763 | 1.0000 |
| CHF Franc | 0.8345 | 1.3245 | 1.6245 |
| JP Yen | 0.0081 | 1.2747 | 0.0081 |
| CA Dollar | 0.7337 | 1.2629 | 0.8772 |
| IT Lira | 0.0006 | 1.0032 | 0.0006 |
| NL Guilder | 0.0020 | 0.8332 | 0.0020 |
| FR Franc | 0.1748 | 0.2865 | 0.1092 |

| Energy | | Mid-East Currencies | |
|---------|--------|---------------------|--------|
| Oil | Last | USD | DEM |
| Brent | 18.65 | 0.2888 | 0.4521 |
| WTI | 21.05 | 0.2778 | 0.4412 |
| Bosny | 18.65 | 0.2778 | 0.4412 |
| Dubai | 18.28 | 0.2778 | 0.4412 |
| UCL Gas | 201.00 | 1.9674 | 3.1339 |

| Metal Prices | | Currency Deposit Rates (Bid) | |
|-----------------|--------|------------------------------|------|
| Metal | Price | Period | Rate |
| Gold (oz) | 352.4 | 1 Month | 5.38 |
| Silver (oz) | 7.29 | 3 Months | 5.46 |
| Platinum (oz) | 381.75 | 6 Months | 5.54 |
| AL (3 Months) | 1947 | 9 Months | 5.62 |
| CU (3 Months) | 2386 | 12 Months | 5.70 |
| Zinc (3 Months) | 1267 | 1 Year | 5.78 |
| Lead (3 Months) | 888 | | |
| Ni (3 Months) | 8110 | | |

| Main Equity Indices | | JOD Cross Rates | |
|---------------------|------------|-----------------|--------|
| Bourse | Index | USD | DEM |
| New York | DOW JONES | 0.5388 | 0.8751 |
| Nasdaq | S&P 500 | 0.512 | 0.865 |
| London | FTSE 100 | 0.6 | 0.9 |
| Tokyo | NIKKEI 225 | 0.013 | 0.013 |
| Paris | CAC 40 | 0.013 | 0.013 |
| Frankfurt | DAX | 0.013 | 0.013 |

| Commodity | | JOD Cross Rates | |
|---------------|--------|-----------------|--------|
| Commodity | Price | USD | DEM |
| Coffee (c/lb) | 191.57 | 0.708 | 0.710 |
| Cocoa (c/lb) | 1479 | 1.1309 | 1.1308 |
| Sugar (c/lb) | 0 | 0.4176 | 0.4197 |
| Wheat (c/lb) | 130 | 0.4871 | 0.4895 |
| Soy (c/lb) | 23.45 | 0.1238 | 0.1244 |
| Tea (c/lb) | 12 | 0.5769 | 0.5816 |
| Barley (c/lb) | 0 | 0.3711 | 0.373 |
| Rice (c/lb) | 200 | 0.4167 | 0.4206 |

THE Daily Crossword

ACROSS

- No-sun
- Flight manoeuvre
- Mosque priest
- Pungent bulb
- "— was I ere..."
- Place
- Subjected to hardship
- Military and Dickinson
- Hearst and Hutton
- Elizabethan gullies
- Enjoyed a repast
- South African
- Desert
- Multitasking, for one
- Sixth sense
- Amusement
- Athena and Aphrodite
- Occupation
- Stones
- East of the Urals
- Close and Moore
- Fellow
- Rosenkavalier
- Racing sections
- Anno Onkley
- Islamic title
- Egypt, abbr.
- Advantage
- Theodora and Eugenie
- Mosla and Madison
- Mother-of-pearl
- Robert —
- of Capri
- One more time
- Tiny plant
- Cosy abode
- Surfeited

by Roger Jurgovan

Puzzle solved:

| | |
|----------|-------------|
| TEARAT | CONSUMER |
| ANISLOPE | ONEONONE |
| SCALIED | CLOSINGS |
| TAMED | AKIN YORO |
| EPIOS | TRANS SCAR |
| RED | ERODE |
| STED | CAISE |
| ACME | REAR |
| AGATIES | WELLREAD |
| MER | TRUST VEE |
| ORTS | SWISS RAIGS |
| EMIT | MITE BASIO |
| BASELINE | DEVISE |
| ANTEATER | ELEVEN |
| SEEDBEDS | ELDEST |

DOWN

- Luna —
- Concerning
- 503
- One on the move
- Ingrate
- Lull
- Reed
- Bullying cheers
- Favente
- Dispute
- Braun and Chatterly
- Suit to —
- Jumble
- Abound
- 21 Term.
- Undeveloped flowers
- Side dish
- Carroll heroine
- Artemis and Diana
- Part of USA: abbr.
- Shoe parts
- Lynal poems
- Net
- Dry run tests
- Puff
- Drop
- 51 Alone
- Social swells
- Golf term
- Omni and Forum
- Doles
- Filed
- Interfection
- Being
- Blank and Brooks
- Heroic tale
- 55 Beat it
- PA port
- 57 Mail
- Iniquity

Peanuts

ARE WE GONNA HAVE A BASEBALL TEAM AGAIN THIS YEAR?

YES BUT WE WEREN'T GOING TO TELL YOU..

WE WERE ALL HOPING YOU WOULDN'T FIND OUT BECAUSE WE ALL KNOW YOU'RE THE WORST PLAYER IN THE HISTORY OF THE GAME..

PUT ME DOWN FOR RIGHT FIELD

Andy Capp

WHAT DID THE DOCTOR HAVE TO SAY?

HE ADVISED ME TO GET AWAY FOR A FEW DAYS AND FORGET MY TROUBLES COMPLETELY.

CHEER UP, I'D WOULD OF IT.

I'LL SEND YOU A POSTCARD EVERY DAY.

Mutt'n'Jeff

JEFF HAS SUFFERED A BLOW ON THE HEAD AND SEEMS TO BE IN A FOG!

I'LL LEAVE THIS NOTE ON THE BOOKS, JUST IN CASE SOME ONE CALLS FOR ME!

DRIVER, TAKE ME TO LUCER (S-10)!

SAY! THAT AIN'T NO ADDRESS, THAT'S A PHONE NUMBER!

OH! THANKS! THANKS FOR YOUR PHONE NUMBER! IF I FORGET IT, I'LL LOOK IT UP IN THE PHONE BOOK.

HE GIVES ME THE NUMBER, THEN HE THINKS ME FOR IT. HE DON'T EVEN KNOW WINNIE AND HE SEZ HE'LL LOOK IT UP!

SOUNDS LIKE A MUTT!

I'LL WAIT FIFTEEN MINUTES MORE, THEN IF I DON'T SHOW UP, I'LL LEAVE.

Wait-and-see mode continues at AFM

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Amman stock market continued on a wait-and-see mode as investors maintained positions awaiting the release of final figures of companies and decisions to issue bonus shares, dealers reported Thursday.

Turnover for the week ending Thursday rose a little, but share prices slipped as some speculators sought liquidity to switch holdings, the dealers said.

The Amman Financial Market (AFM) said in its weekly summary that trading for the week was 4.1 million dinars (\$5.78 mil-

lion), up from the previous week's 3.7 million dinars (\$5.21 million).

But prices slipped by 0.68 per cent as measured by the official AFM index based on 60 major companies from among the 135 listed in the market. The index closed at 155.02 points, down 1.06 points, from the week's opening of 156.08, the report said.

The AFM summary said 3.2 million shares were traded under 2,272 transactions during the week, with daily average trading at 820,000 dinars (\$1.15 million).

Industrial companies led trading volume with 1.86 million dinars (\$2.62 million). The insurance sector

accounted for 970,000 dinars (\$1.36 million), commercial banks and investment houses with 950,000 dinars (\$1.34 million) and service sector companies with 31,000 dinars (\$43,710).

On a sectoral level, industrial companies gained 1.08 per cent during the week and insurance stocks edged up by 0.05 per cent. The service sector fell 0.63 per cent and commercial banks and investment houses declined by 1.96 per cent.

According to the AFM report, this week's business involved stocks of 77 companies; 18 of them closed with gains, 44 slipped and 15 stabilised.

Daily Business Beat

A review of news from the Arabic press

Jordan is largest per capita recipient of Japanese aid

PRIME MINISTER Abdul Karim Kabariti Wednesday signed an agreement with Takayuki Kimura, Japanese ambassador to Jordan, in which Japan will provide 2.5 billion Japanese yen (approximately \$31 million at current exchange rate) grant to Jordan. Explaining the nature of the grant, Mr. Kimura said, "the grant can be used for the payment of any non-military import from any country of the world. It is virtually a cash grant."

It is the third consecutive year for Japan to provide this type of non-project grant to Jordan and this year's amount is more than twice as large as the previous two years' grant. "It is an appreciation and support of Jordan's policies towards Middle East peace and its effort towards self-sustainable economic development. We hope this will help in augmenting foreign exchange reserve of Jordan and in providing more stable base for implementing economic reform," said Mr. Kimura.

Jordan is not only the biggest recipient of the non-project grant from Japan among the Middle East countries, it is accepting other kind of cooperation such as project grants, project loans and technical assistance from Japan.

Jordan is also the largest per capita recipient of Japanese aid in the world," said Mr. Kimura. In the past five years Jordan received 40 per cent of its net aid inflow from Japan, according to OECD statistics.

Aramex attracts \$7m from sale of shares in United States

ARAMEX, A major air cargo and express delivery company in the Middle East, has become the first Arab firm to float shares for public subscription in the United States. The company has offered one million shares at the beginning of this year on the NASDAQ bourse.

The company was able to attract \$7 million from the sale of the new shares. The International U.S. company Airborne Express has acquired 6.8 per cent of the Aramex shares for \$2 million shortly before Aramex floated the shares in the U.S.

The funds will be used for expanding the operations of Aramex and develop its services in addition to establishing new facilities at free shops around the world (Special/Jordan Times).

Investors rush to fund UAE commodities market project

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Investors have rushed to take part in an ambitious project for a free storage zone and commodities market in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), committing funds exceeding its capital of \$3 billion, the project's manager has said.

Mohammad Al Husani said public subscription to the Middle East's first free storage zone would open in September and work on the project on the Sadiyat island off Abu Dhabi would start late this year.

"There has been a strong interest by local and international investors. You can say the capital has been oversubscribed," he told AFP.

"The investors are from the UAE and other countries. Some of them are banks, which have committed to contribute more than the capital," he said.

Mr. Husani said the project would be jointly owned by the Abu Dhabi government and the local and foreign private sector. He said the government had not yet decided on its stake but added it would be exceeded by private investment.

The UAE approved the project in 1996, saying it would be one of the busiest commodities markets in the world given its location midway between the West and Singapore, Japan and other major Asian markets.

| AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET HOUSING BANK CENTER - AMMAN - JORDAN TELEPHONE: 607111 / 607119 ORGANIZED MARKET TRADING ACTIVITY FOR THE PERIOD 10/03/1997 - 12/03/1997 WEEKLY REPORT | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---------|----------------------------|-------|-------|------------------|---------------|-----------------|---------------|--------|--------|---------------|--------|-------------------------------------|---------------------|---|
| DURING THE LAST 3 WEEKS | | COMPANY NAME | P/E | DIV | No. OF CONTRACTS | No. OF SHARES | VALUE TRADED JD | OPENING PRICE | HIGH | LOW | CLOSING PRICE | CHANGE | AVERAGE TURNOVER MARKET SHARE PRICE | NO. OF TRADING DAYS | |
| HIGH | LOW | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 269.000 | 260.000 | ARAB BANK | 14.2 | 3.25 | 37 | 1980 | 521970 | 266.50 | 266.00 | 255.50 | 255.50 | -7.00 | 263.221 | 0.45 | 1 |
| 3.100 | 1.980 | JOR. NATIONAL BK. | - | 0.00 | 98 | 118520 | 225478 | 1.94 | 1.94 | 1.92 | 1.96 | -.02 | 1.936 | 0.07 | 5 |
| 3.420 | 3.000 | BANK OF JORDAN | 10.7 | 0.00 | 7 | 2766 | 6284 | 3.00 | 3.02 | 2.95 | 2.97 | -.03 | 2.995 | 0.16 | 5 |
| 1.150 | 1.040 | KIB. EAST INV. BK. | 66.3 | 0.00 | 32 | 32000 | 32539 | 1.08 | 1.09 | 1.00 | 1.01 | -.07 | 1.017 | 0.32 | 6 |
| 2.410 | 2.200 | INDUSTRIAL INV. BK. | 5.2 | 6.08 | 5 | 1561 | 2526 | 2.30 | 2.35 | 2.28 | 2.29 | -.01 | 2.288 | 0.14 | 3 |
| 4.800 | 4.430 | THE HOUSING BK. | 17.4 | 2.97 | 15 | 7810 | 28427 | 4.65 | 4.70 | 4.65 | 4.65 | - | 4.644 | 0.31 | 5 |
| 2.800 | 2.730 | JOR. KUNAAT BANK | 19.8 | 0.00 | 24 | 4061 | 16636 | 2.73 | 2.74 | 2.72 | 2.74 | -.01 | 2.745 | 0.41 | 5 |
| .950 | .840 | JOR. GULF BANK | 5.1 | 8.14 | 34 | 56915 | 48586 | .85 | .86 | .84 | .86 | -.01 | .854 | 0.10 | 5 |
| 4.000 | 3.810 | JOR. ISLAMIC BANK | 18.4 | 0.00 | 34 | 6976 | 26717 | 3.86 | 3.85 | 3.81 | 3.83 | -.01 | 3.800 | 0.10 | 5 |
| 3.200 | 3.200 | JOR. INV. FID. MARK. | 37.2 | 0.00 | 4 | 1500 | 5065 | 3.20 | 3.20 | 3.15 | 3.20 | - | 3.150 | 0.16 | 3 |
| 1.170 | 1.150 | ABRY. AL-HAL. (MUTUAL) | 9 | 10.00 | 2 | 300 | 300 | 1.55 | 1.58 | 1.50 | 1.50 | -.05 | 1.500 | 0.10 | 1 |
| 1.210 | 1.210 | WILLAGEH. INV. BK. | - | 0.00 | 11 | 14444 | 17119 | 1.21 | 1.20 | 1.15 | 1.20 | -.01 | 1.149 | 0.16 | 3 |
| CHANGE: -1.06% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| BANKS SECTOR | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1.990 | 1.880 | JOR. FRENCH INSUR. | 5.6 | 10.42 | 19 | 315730 | 59880 | 1.93 | 1.94 | 1.87 | 1.92 | -.01 | 1.900 | 14.351 | 5 |
| 6.000 | 6.000 | KEMAH AL-ARABI | 15.2 | 3.23 | 8 | 61511 | 269066 | 6.00 | 6.00 | 6.00 | 6.00 | - | 6.000 | 6.351 | 1 |
| CHANGE: -0.05% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| INSURANCE SECTOR | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1.680 | 1.640 | JOR. ELECTRIC PWR. | 11.4 | 7.32 | 44 | 28550 | 47082 | 1.65 | 1.66 | 1.64 | 1.64 | -.01 | 1.649 | 0.130 | 5 |
| 2.480 | 2.430 | SHIPPING LINES | 10.2 | 8.22 | 2 | 750 | 1023 | 2.43 | 2.43 | 2.43 | 2.43 | - | 2.431 | 0.11 | 1 |
| 1.280 | 1.168 | KIB. PORTFOLIO | 0.00 | 0.00 | 58 | 20711 | 22671 | 1.15 | 1.17 | 1.13 | 1.13 | -.01 | 1.139 | 0.45 | 5 |
| .950 | .950 | KIB. PORTFOLIO | 22.6 | 2.65 | 34 | 32400 | 32261 | .96 | 1.01 | .98 | 1.01 | -.05 | .994 | 0.67 | 5 |
| .610 | .610 | JORDAN INTEL. TRAD. | 21.3 | 0.00 | 3 | 172 | 103 | .60 | .61 | .61 | .61 | - | .599 | 0.05 | 2 |
| .460 | .450 | NACH. EXP. REKT. HALL | 0.00 | 0.00 | 6 | 1820 | 858 | .46 | .48 | .46 | .46 | - | .469 | 0.156 | 2 |
| 1.550 | 1.400 | KIB. EAST INV. BK. | 60.2 | 0.00 | 12 | 37100 | 12985 | 1.40 | 1.40 | 1.39 | 1.40 | - | 1.296 | 0.102 | 1 |
| 1.000 | 1.000 | JOR. INV. FID. MARK. | 12.0 | 6.08 | 17 | 8055 | 26613 | 3.31 | 3.40 | 3.30 | 3.30 | -.07 | 3.325 | 0.080 | 3 |
| 1.080 | 1.000 | SARMA EDUCATION | - | 0.00 | 16 | 7050 | 6921 | 1.00 | 1.00 | .91 | .90 | -.07 | .901 | 0.15 | 5 |
| 2.120 | 2.120 | UNIFIED CO. | 8.2 | 6.36 | 20 | 19600 | 24939 | 1.00 | 1.02 | 1.02 | 1.02 | -.07 | 1.003 | 0.392 | 4 |
| .830 | .760 | UNION LAND DEV. | - | 0.00 | 10 | 3575 | 2727 | .76 | .78 | .75 | .78 | -.03 | .761 | 0.072 | 3 |
| CHANGE: -0.05% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| SERVICES SECTOR | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3.500 | 3.400 | JOR. CEMENT FACT. | 20.2 | 2.82 | 62 | 47003 | 165047 | 3.44 | 3.53 | 3.46 | 3.53 | -.07 | 3.512 | 0.078 | 5 |
| 3.250 | 3.200 | JOR. PHOSPHATE MINES | 26.0 | 0.00 | 8 | 2526 | 8326 | 3.20 | 3.35 | 3.28 | 3.25 | -.05 | 3.299 | 0.06 | 3 |
| 6.100 | 5.950 | ARAB FERTILISER | 18.5 | 2.28 | 26 | 14982 | 91299 | 6.00 | 6.10 | 6.00 | 6.10 | -.10 | 6.094 | 0.19 | 5 |
| 10.160 | 10.000 | JOR. PETROLEUM REFINERY | 10.3 | 7.88 | 29 | 4683 | 47369 | 10.15 | 10.17 | 10.05 | 10.15 | - | 10.115 | 0.07 | 5 |
| 6.250 | 6.250 | JORDAN TANNING | 6.8 | 5.67 | 2 | 435 | 260 | 6.25 | 6.30 | 6.25 | 6.25 | - | 6.251 | 0.032 | 1 |
| 1.400 | 1.350 | MOJES INDUSTRIES | 12.7 | 0.00 | 22 | 16745 | 22338 | 1.38 | 1.41 | 1.39 | 1.39 | -.01 | 1.392 | 0.176 | 3 |
| 2.800 | 2.570 | INDUSTRIAL COMM. COR. | 34.7 | 0.00 | 4 | 812 | 2101 | 2.60 | 2.61 | 2.58 | 2.58 | -.02 | 2.587 | 0.07 | 3 |
| 7.880 | 6.950 | JOR. MOJES ALLES | 8.8 | 2.62 | 5 | 2369 | 14198 | 6.95 | 6.90 | 6.90 | 6.90 | -.05 | 6.896 | 0.059 | 3 |
| 3.930 | 3.720 | ARAB PHARM. IND. | 20.6 | 5.32 | 57 | 23180 | 87256 | 3.72 | 3.75 | 3.70 | 3.76 | -.01 | 3.713 | 0.158 | 5 |
| 7.250 | 6.870 | JOR. CERAMIC IND. | 8.5 | 2.68 | 15 | 867 | 11296 | 6.07 | 6.06 | 6.78 | 6.05 | -.07 | 6.036 | 0.067 | 3 |
| 1.430 | 1.400 | JOR. TEXTILE FACT. | 9.9 | 7.50 | 3 | 675 | 1004 | 1.41 | 1.41 | 1.40 | 1.40 | -.01 | 1.406 | 0.021 | 1 |
| 2.500 | 2.500 | GENERAL HUNTING | 4.3 | 11.24 | 1 | 800 | 1225 | 2.50 | 2.45 | 2.45 | 2.45 | -.05 | 2.450 | 0.050 | 1 |
| 8.480 | 8.400 | ARAB CEMENT. ENTERPRISE | 21.8 | 2.75 | 1 | 400 | 400 | 8.40 | 8.40 | 8.00 | 8.00 | -.40 | 8.000 | 0.000 | 1 |
| 6.750 | 6.750 | JOR. ALUMINA IND. INV. | 13.1 | 0.00 | 15 | 8202 | 29255 | 6.75 | 6.75 | 6.75 | 6.75 | - | 6.750 | 0.137 | 5 |
| 3.600 | 3.450 | ARAB ALUM. IND. | 8.7 | 9.12 | 11 | 2900 | 9550 | 3.45 | 3.32 | 3.32 | 3.29 | -.16 | 3.293 | 0.24 | 5 |
| .610 | .560 | LIVESTOCK & POULTRY | - | 0.00 | 203 | 339200 | 199209 | .56 | .61 | .55 | .57 | -.01 | .567 | 0.170 | 5 |
| 1.200 | 1.150 | ARAB PAPER CORP. LTD. | 7.7 | 9.08 | 7 | 2450 | 7365 | 1.15 | 1.16 | 1.14 | 1.14 | -.01 | 1.147 | 0.229 | 5 |
| .480 | .480 | ARAB PAPER CORP. LTD. | 9.5 | 9.28 | 31 | 12602 | 8753 | .48 | .48 | .48 | .48 | - | .480 | 0.276 | 3 |
| 1.100 | 1.010 | EXTENDED. PAPER CORP. | - | 0.00 | 36 | 13400 | 12668 | 1.03 | 1.03 | .98 | .98 | -.05 | 1.005 | 0.33 | 5 |
| .820 | .770 | JOR. ROCCOOL. IND. | 133.4 | 0.00 | 1 | 100 | 76 | .77 | .76 | .76 | .76 | -.01 | .760 | 0.03 | 5 |
| 2.350 | 2.300 | NATL. CABLE WIRE. HTRC | 14.3 | 0.00 | 5 | 11531 | 24447 | 2.35 | 2.35 | 2.33 | 2.35 | - | 2.326 | 0.45 | 2 |
| .790 | .680 | JOR. SULPHUR-CHEN | 0.00 | 0.00 | 8 | 1711 | 12220 | .68 | .69 | .68 | .68 | - | .680 | 0.27 | 5 |
| 1.600 | 1.490 | ARAB PAPER CORP. LTD. | 27.3 | 0.00 | 29 | 10660 | 16149 | 1.50 | 1.51 | 1.46 | 1.46 | -.04 | 1.490 | 0.27 | 5 |
| 1.800 | 1.640 | UNIV. MORG. IND. | 5.1 | 11.98 | 34 | 13800 | 21578 | 1.69 | 1.70 | 1.67 | 1.67 | -.02 | 1.684 | 0.26 | 5 |
| 1.330 | 1.320 | JOR. INDUS. RESOURCES | 16.7 | 0.00 | 60 | 31800 | 62722 | 1.32 | 1.35 | 1.32 | 1.32 | -.02 | 1.322 | 0.39 | 5 |
| .540 | .490 | JOR. NEW CABLE CO. | 22.9 | 0.00 | 53 | 31487 | 29077 | .49 | .51 | .48 | .48 | -.01 | .487 | 0.17 | 3 |
| 1.900 | 1.830 | EL-SAY. READY WEAR | 117.0 | 0.00 | 17 | 4434 | 8538 | 1.85 | 1.85 | 1.82 | 1.82 | -.03 | 1.843 | 0.02 | 4 |
| 1.150 | 1.170 | IND. TOBACCO | 27.5 | 0.00 | 38 | 163800 | 168386 | 1.17 | 1.18 | 1.17 | 1.17 | - | 1.179 | 0.158 | 4 |
| 1.050 | .990 | UNION CH. & VED. | 22.9 | 0.00 | 22 | 15100 | 14772 | .99 | .99 | .97 | .97 | -.02 | .976 | 0.41 | 5 |
| CHANGE: -1.00% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| INDUSTRIAL SECTOR | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| GRAND TOTAL | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1367 1535738 3176252 INDEX NUMBER: 159.07 CHANGE: -0.08% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| NO. OF DAYS TRADED: 5 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| DAILY AVERAGE OF TRADING VOLUME: 275,148 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| DAILY AVERAGE OF TRADED SHARES: 307,148 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| DAILY AVERAGE OF CONTRACTS: 272 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| PARALLEL MARKET TRADING ACTIVITY FOR THE PERIOD 10/03/1997 - 12/03/1997 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| WEEKLY REPORT | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| DURING THE LAST 3 WEEKS | | COMPANY NAME | P/E | DIV | No. OF CONTRACTS | No. OF SHARES | VALUE TRADED JD | OPENING PRICE | HIGH | LOW | CLOSING PRICE | CHANGE | AVERAGE TURNOVER MARKET SHARE PRICE | NO. OF TRADING DAYS | |
| HIGH | LOW | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| .510 | .460 | CENTRAL GEN. STORAGE | 18.5 | 0.00 | 3 | 1200 | 552 | .48 | .46 | .46 | .46 | -.02 | .460 | 0.36 | 1 |
| .690 | .520 | JOR. T.N. PAC. | 12.8 | 0.00 | 29 | 30650 | 15115 | .51 | .51 | .48 | .48 | -.03 | .493 | 0.78 | 5 |
| .400 | .400 | ARAB F.N. INVEST. | 0.00 | 0.00 | 109 | 146488 | 40220 | .42 | .43 | .40 | .40 | -.02 | .410 | 1.55 | 5 |
| .720 | .690 | UNION INV. CO. | 67.0 | 0.00 | 14 | 169026 | 32091 | .69 | .70 | .69 | .69 | -.01 | .690 | 0.76 | 5 |
| .700 | .640 | JOR. F.N. INV. CO. 75% | 8.0 | 0.00 | 4 | 20750 | 12475 | 1.00 | .95 | .85 | .85 | -.10 | .849 | 0.08 | 3 |
| .700 | .640 | AL-AN-NAYAN 75% | 14.9 | 0.00 | 5 | 1850 | 758 | .65 | .66 | .65 | .66 | -.01 | .640 | 0.03 | 2 |
| .460 | .460 | UNION INVEST. CO. | 67.0 | 0.00 | 14 | 169026 | 32091 | .69 | .70 | .69 | .69 | -.01 | .690 | 0.76 | 5 |
| .500 | .460 | ARAB T. TL. INV. TRD. | - | 0.00 | 24 | 52050 | 23312 | .46 | .46 | .44 | .45 | -.02 | .448 | 1.04 | 5 |
| .270 | .210 | JOR. INDUS. HATCHERY-JENCO | - | 0.00 | 23 | 27000 | 5793 | .22 | .22 | .20 | .21 | -.01 | .214 | 1.50 | 5 |
| 1.420 | 1.320 | WATIL. CHLORIDE | - | 0.00 | 21 | 20550 | 28568 | 1.40 | 1.36 | 1.39 | 1.39 | -.01 | 1.389 | 0.28 | 5 |
| .570 | .520 | WATIL. CHLORIDE | - | 0.00 | 17 | 9150 | 1740 | .52 | .52 | .51 | .51 | -.01 | .510 | 0.34 | 6 |
| .400 | .400 | WATIL. CHLORIDE | - | 0.00 | 23 | 85850 | 51866 | .61 | .61 | .60 | .60 | -.01 | .610 | 5.85 | 5 |
| .650 | .610 | KIBRAT. PHARM. 75% | - | 0.00 | 16 | 27512 | 8795 | .61 | .62 | .60 | .62 | -.01 | .624 | 0.29 | 5 |
| .780 | .730 | JORDAN STEEL | - | 0.00 | 22 | 53341 | 39755 | .74 | .75 | .74 | .74 | - | .745 | 0.35 | 5 |
| .510 | .500 | ARAB ELECT. INDUS. | 148.4 | 0.00 | 3 | 10900 | 5555 | .51 | .51 | .51 | .51 | - | .510 | 0.18 | 3 |
| 1.040 | 1.020 | WATIL. CHLORIDE 75% | - | 0.00 | 9 | 14313 | 8259 | 1.02 | 1.00 | .96 | .94 | -.06 | .922 | 0.80 | 6 |
| .620 | .600 | RAFI. PHARM. 65% | - | 0.00 | 38 | 21723 | 5121 | .58 | .60 | .58 | .59 | -.01 | .586 | 0.21 | 5 |
| .470 | .420 | UNION. INV. | 25.9 | 0.00 | 70 | 75259 | 22065 | .42 | .44 | .40 | .42 | - | .424 | 1.07 | 5 |
| .820 | .800 | WATIL. CHLORIDE | - | 0.00 | 8 | 8240 | 4245 | .80 | .80 | .76 | .74 | -.04 | .750 | 0.34 | 6 |
| .800 | .800 | WATIL. CHLORIDE | - | 0.00 | 8 | 1000 | 698 | .71 | .70 | .69 | .69 | -.02 | .690 | 0.10 | 5 |
| .790 | .650 | KIB. EAST INV. CO. | 66.3 | 0.00 | 224 | 626050 | 466744 | .66 | .74 | .66 | .66 | -.04 | .693 | 2.89 | 5 |
| .900 | .900 | ARAB T. TL. FOOD FACT. | 61.1 | 0.00 | 1 | 100 | 07 | .90 | .87 | .87 | .87 | -.02 | .870 | 0.00 | 1 |
| .510 | .420 | WATIL. CHLORIDE 75% | - | 0.00 | 157 | 282561 | 121972 | .44 | .44 | .41 | .42 | -.02 | .427 | 0.45 | 5 |
| GRAND TOTAL | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 505 1493332 590207 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| NO. OF DAYS TRADED: 5 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| DAILY AVERAGE OF TRADING VOLUME: 101,581 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| DAILY AVERAGE OF TRADED SHARES: 338,646 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| DAILY AVERAGE OF CONTRACTS: 181 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Hilary Lindh, one of America's greats, retires

VAIL, Colorado (R) — The U.S. Ski team lost one of its greatest champions Thursday when world downhill champion Hilary Lindh retired, ending a 13-year run remarkable for its longevity and excellence.

Her eyes glistening as she recalled treasured moments with teammates and coaches, the 27-year-old from Juneau, Alaska, spoke of the satisfactions of this final season in which she rallied from a 32nd-place finish in the season opener to a World Championship a month ago at Sestriere, Italy.

"I'm happy how the whole year went, how I turned things around. But I don't want to go through that again," Lindh said of the cumulative rigors of training and racing.

Nor did the promise of an Olympics next February, coupled with another year of rich contracts, sway her decision.

"It's not about results or medals. It's about getting on with the rest of my life."

She spoke with particular passion of her many memories of racing at Vail, site of a World Cup victory in 1995.

"That was an incredible, sweet moment for me," she said. "I thought it would be the ultimate to end my career with a victory here. Unfortunately that didn't happen," said Lindh, who finished in ninth place



French skier Luc Alphand clowns around with his two trophies after winning the men's World Cup Super-G title for the season at Vail, Colorado. Alphand added the Super-G title to his downhill title after winning the downhill title (Reuters photo)

Wednesday in the World Cup finals downhill.

She will compete next week in the U.S. National Championships at Sugarloaf, Maine, then enter for the spring term at the University of Utah, where she will study biology.

Frequently at her best in important races, she won a silver medal at the 1992 Olympics, bronze at the 1996 world championships

and, finally, gold at the 1997 worlds — stamping herself the most successful American downhill in major events.

Along the way, she won three world cup races, a world junior championship and universal respect as a tough competitor reflecting her Alaskan heritage.

Her departure leaves a gaping void on a U.S. downhill squad decimated this season by injuries to

three of its stars, Picabo Street, Tommy Moe and Kyle Rasmussen, and the lingering effects of a 1995 injury to AJ Kitt.

Coaches implored her to leave the door open for reconsideration.

"If you want to define success for the U.S. Ski team, you'd use Hilary as a model," said team athletic director Paul Major. "There's no way to replace her."

Leeds — worst behaved team in Premier League

LONDON (AFP) — Leeds United's growing reputation as one of the most unattractive teams to watch in the Premiership was given further weight on Thursday with the news that they are bottom of the Fair Play table.

And to make matters worse, the Yorkshire club's fans are also rated as the worst behaved.

George Graham's side have won few friends this season after grinding their way to mid-table security with a string of narrow wins and hard-fought draws.

They have scored just 24 goals in 30 Premiership matches — the lowest total in all four English divisions.

And now comes confirmation that their battle to mid-table mediocrity has come not just without style but also without grace.

Leeds (7.33) are at the bottom of the fair play table, just below Middlesbrough and Coventry, and they are also some way adrift at the foot of the behaviour of the public league.

With an average of just 6.96 over 27 matches, Leeds are nearly one whole point below Middlesbrough.

Nottingham Forest fans were the best behaved up to the end of February, ahead of those from Blackburn and Sheffield Wednesday.

Title challengers Liverpool are on course to finish top of the Premiership's fair play league.

The Reds head the latest table, taking into account matches up to the end of February, with an average score of 8.44 over 27 games.

The score is determined by marks awarded for the number of yellow and red cards incurred, positive play, respect towards opponents and referees, and the behaviour of officials.

Liverpool's closest rivals are Sheffield Wednesday and fellow Merseysiders Everton, both with 8.39, and Premiership leaders Manchester United (8.30).

Villeurbanne beat Estudiantes Madrid in final seconds

LONDON (R) — Villeurbanne defender Alain Digne scored a crucial three-pointer with 29 seconds left to help his side to victory over Estudiantes Madrid and a place in the quarter-finals of the men's Euroleague competition.

Villeurbanne won their elimination round decider 75-71 on Thursday and face Turkey's Efes Pilsen, who beat Maccabi Tel Aviv 84-69 in their third leg match, in the last eight.

Digne was Villeurbanne's key man, scoring 17 points and playing a highly effective defensive key role against American Chandler Thompson. He scored nine points inside a minute at one stage in the second half.

The all-Italian duel between Stefanel Milano and Kinder Bologna ended in an exciting 78-76 win for Stefanel.

Stefanel dominated the first half and built a lead of 14 points late in the first half.

But Kinder rallied after the break. Arjan Komazec leading the way with 25 points.

They closed the gap to just one point but a three-pointer by Flavio Portaluppi

EUROPEAN BASKETBALL

and two free shots by Gregor Fucks saw off their challenge.

Stefanel will meet Slovenia's Olimpija Ljubljana, 62-61 winners over Cibona Zagreb, in the quarter-finals.

Greek side Olympiakos, who surprisingly slipped up at home on Tuesday when they lost 61-60 to Partizan Belgrade, made no mistake in their decider in Belgrade, winning 74-69.

Holders Panathinaikos of Greece clinched their quarter-final place on Tuesday without the need of a third leg. They scored an emphatic 70-55 victory over Limoges in France.

SPORTS IN BRIEF

City land rising Dutch star

MANCHESTER (AFP) — Manchester City revealed Thursday they have signed highly-rated Dutchman Gerard Wiekens from Veendam — but the 23-year-old will not be arriving until the summer. Veendam are involved in end-of-season play-offs and see the midfielder as essential to their bid to win promotion to Holland's top flight. City, still with an outside chance of winning promotion back to the Premiership, would not say what they are paying for Wiekens, who has been named as player of the year in the Dutch second division. New Manchester City boss Frank Clark is thrilled with his latest capture and said: "He's got tremendous potential. He's one of the best young players in Holland. He's played at every level except full international but I'm sure he'll go on to earn his cap. He's got pace, is a good passer of the ball and very competitive. And like all Dutch players he's technically very good."

Karlsruhe give Haessler ultimatum

KARLSRUHE (R) — Karlsruhe have told German international Thomas Haessler he has until Monday to make up his mind whether he plans to stay at the Bundesliga club next season. The diminutive midfielder, who is recovering from a broken leg, has been the subject of much transfer speculation in the past few months and is believed to have received an attractive offer from Bayer Leverkusen. After talks with Haessler's wife and manager Angela on Thursday, the club said the 30-year-old former Juventus, Roma and Cologne player had until Monday at 0900 local time to announce his decision. "We need a decision so that all this speculation stops, whatever it is," club chairman Roland Schneider said. Haessler has undergone an operation on his broken left leg and is expected to leave hospital at the weekend.

Heyns wins at S. African National Championships

JOHANNESBURG (R) — South Africa's double Olympic swimming gold medallist Penny Heyns successfully returned to competition in Johannesburg on Friday winning the South African National Championships 100 metre breaststroke final. But Heyns, the world record holder, had to pull out all the stops to beat Julia Russell in a Pan-Pacific qualifying time of 1:09.43 minutes. The 21-year old, who was gasping for breath at the end of the race, said afterwards: "I only resumed training on January 15 and this is my first competition since Atlanta. I was delighted with my morning heat effort of 1:09.11, especially because I glided into the walls at both ends. 'I have not been stroking well at these championships, but at least I now have a starting point from which I can build on during training. Russell second in 1:11.71, Tanya Naude (1:12.52) and 14-year-old Sarah Poewe (1:12.65) also went under the Pan-Pacific Games qualifying mark of 1:13.13.

Kansas and Kentucky win in NCAA tourney

WINSTON-SALEM, North Carolina (R) — North Carolina coach Dean Smith got his record-tying 876th victory, top-ranked Kansas and defending champion Kentucky won, and the college of Charleston extended its improbable streak on the first day of the NCAA men's basketball tournament Thursday.

In the East regionals in Winston-Salem, Serge Zwikker scored 16 of his 19 points in the second half as top-seeded North Carolina pulled away for an 82-74 victory over 16th-seeded Fairfield.

In Memphis, Tennessee, Kansas took the first step on its expected road to the final four with a 78-64 victory over 16th-seeded Jackson State in the Southeast Region.

Scott Pollard had 12 points, 19 rebounds and five blocked shots to lead the top-seeded

Jayhawks (33-1), who will next play eighth-seeded Purdue.

The eighth-seeded boiler-makers survived an overtime thriller for an 83-76 victory over ninth-seeded Rhode Island as Brad Miller scored five of his career-high 31 points in overtime. Chad Austin and freshman Mike Robinson each added 15 points for Purdue (18-11).

In the West regionals at Salt Lake City, Utah, Kentucky began its title defence with a 92-54 thrashing of 16th-seeded Montana as Cameron Mills and Wayne Turner scored 19 points apiece to lead a balanced attack for the top-seeded Wildcats (31-4).

Kentucky will face eighth-seeded Iowa, a 73-60 winner over ninth seed Virginia, in the second round on Saturday.

The 12th-seeded College of Charleston extended the nation's longest winning

streak to 23 games when it upset fifth seed Maryland 75-66 in the Southeast.

Michael Dickerson scored 16 points and A.J. Bramlett's putback with 2:38 to play snapped a tie as fourth-seeded Arizona closed with a 22-4 run and escaped with a 68-57 victory over 13th-seeded South Alabama.

At Auburn Hills, Michigan, Jelani McCoy and J.R. Henderson each scored 21 points to lead five players in double figures as second-seeded UCLA coasted to a 109-75 victory over 15th seed Charleston Southern in the Midwest region. UCLA will face seventh seed Xavier, an 80-68 victor over 10th seed Vanderbilt, in the second round on Saturday.

Also in the Midwest, third-seeded Cincinnati soundly defeated 14th-seeded Butler 86-69 to earn a spot against sixth-seeded Iowa State, a 69-57 conqueror of 11th-

seeded Illinois State.

In the East, Tim Thomas had 28 points and 15 rebounds as fourth-seeded Villanova opened the second half with a 19-1 run and coasted to a 101-91 victory to end the Cinderella dreams of 13th-seeded Long Island University.

Tony Gonzalez hit a fade-away jumper with 58 seconds remaining to snap a tie and added three free throws in the final 36 seconds to lead California (22-8) to a 55-52 victory over 12th-seeded Princeton.

In Salt Lake City, Utah, Bevan Thomas came off the bench to score 11 of his 16 points in the second half and lead fifth-seeded Boston College to a 73-66 victory over 12th seed Valparaiso. BC will face fourth-seeded St. Joseph's, which pulled away for a 75-65 victory over 13th-seeded Pacific in the West.

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TANNIA HIRSCH
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AVOID THAT THREAT

Both vulnerable. South deals.

| | | | |
|--------------|-----------|----------|------------|
| NORTH | | SOUTH | |
| ♠ 9 | ♠ A | ♠ 10 8 3 | ♠ K Q J 5 |
| ♥ K Q 10 8 3 | ♥ A 8 5 | ♥ 7 5 3 | ♥ 4 2 |
| ♦ 9 7 3 | ♦ 8 6 4 2 | ♦ A J 8 | ♦ 7 5 3 |
| ♣ 8 | ♣ 7 5 3 | ♣ 4 2 | ♣ A 10 4 2 |
| ♠ 9 7 3 | ♠ A 8 5 | ♠ 10 8 3 | ♠ K Q J 5 |
| ♥ K Q 10 8 3 | ♥ A 8 5 | ♥ 7 5 3 | ♥ 4 2 |
| ♦ 9 7 3 | ♦ 8 6 4 2 | ♦ A J 8 | ♦ 7 5 3 |
| ♣ 8 | ♣ 7 5 3 | ♣ 4 2 | ♣ A 10 4 2 |

The bidding: SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST
1♣ Pass 2♣ Pass 3♣ Pass
4♣ Pass 5♣ Pass 6♣ Pass
7♣ Pass
Opening lead: Five of ♣
Some avoidance plays are not easy to spot. Here, East is the danger hand. See if you can spot the line that keeps the menacing defender off lead.
Note North's pass of three no trump. With a second source of tricks in the club suit and an honor in both majors, there was no reason for North to override South's choice of the no-trump come as the final

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

The Canadian Government is interested in entering into a residential lease with a Jordanian company or firm wishing to construct a build-to-suit Villa of 520.0 m² in gross area, on a parcel of land averaging 2,000.0 m² to be situated in Abdoun, Al-Diyar or Al-Swaifiyah which will serve as the new Canadian Official Residence in Amman, Jordan.

Interested parties are asked to contact the Canadian Embassy at the Pearl of Shmeisani Building (4th Floor) Shmeisani, Amman between the hours of 10:00 and 15:00 to obtain a free copy of a briefing document explaining the basic requirements expected for the new Villa.

Expressions of interest should be received at the Canadian Embassy by no later than 15:00 on the 27th day of March, 1997.

Walsh victorious at Cheltenham

CHELTEMHAM (R) — Ireland's Ted Walsh took time away from his media responsibilities at Cheltenham on Thursday to saddle Commanche Court to win the grade one triumph hurdle.

Walsh, who has been working as a television racing commentator this week, landed his first festival win as a trainer in the two miles and one furlong (3.4-km) contest.

"Today is the best racing day of my life. I could kiss you too," Walsh said as he prepared to do an interview with fellow racing pundit Brough Scott in the unsaddling enclosure.

Walsh duly gave Scott a small kiss on his cheeks much to the delight of the onlooking punters. "He can train horses as well as he can talk," Cork-born jockey Norman Williamson, who enjoyed

his fifth Cheltenham success on board Commanche Court, said of the outspoken Walsh.

Last year's Austrian Derby winner, Commanche Court took advantage of his speed over the closing stages to win by a length from 40-1 chance Circus Star with Shooting Light a further one and a quarter lengths further adrift in third.

Walsh has not missed a

Cheltenham festival meeting since he rode his first winner there aboard Castleruddery in the 1974 Kim Muir Chase.

The county Kildare-based trainer and former Irish champion amateur rider gained three more victories at the meeting during a highly successful career in the saddle. Walsh's son Ruby currently heads the table in the Irish amateur riders' title race.

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Bradley leads Mavericks past Celtics

DALLAS (R) — Shawn Bradley had a season-high 31 points. Michael Finley had a steal and driving dunk with 10 seconds to go and the Celtics' Antoine Walker missed a wide open three-point shot at the buzzer as the Dallas Mavericks held on for a 109-107 victory over Boston Thursday.

Finley snuck up on Walker toward the sideline after the Celtic forward rebounded a wild miss by Eric Williams.

Dallas outscored the league-worst Celtics 13-4 in the final 4:10 and Bradley set a Dallas team record in a game by a centre.

"Things turned out well off for me tonight," said Bradley, who came over in the blockbuster trade with the Nets last month. "We knew that we had to pound it inside and go real strong to the basket. Tonight was an opportunity for me to help the team. That helped us win."

"We are trying to get him closer to the basket and trying to get him to use his height to his advantage, to use his skills like hooks and post-ups," said Dallas head coach Jim Clemons. "I hope he's liking it here because he's being effective."

Bradley also had 10 rebounds and four blocks, including one with three seconds left as Walker drove the lane to tie, but had his shot swatted out of bounds.

"They had a couple of real aggressive defensive plays to win the game down the stretch," said Boston coach M.L. Carr. "Obviously, Bradley was huge for them in the ballgame, but I think they got good help down the line."

Dallas has won two straight after a seven-game skid. The Mavericks defeated the Knicks on Tuesday.

In Los Angeles, Rex Chapman scored 22 points, including three three-pointers in a 23-6 third-quarter run, as the Phoenix Suns defeated the Clippers 112-96 to move within two games of the final Western Conference playoff spot.

Los Angeles led 56-51 before Chapman began hitting from long range in the third quarter.

Cedric Cehallos finished with 26 points and 11 rebounds. Kevin Johnson scored 23 points and John Williams added 11 points and 11 rebounds for the Suns, who had all five starters score in double figures for their sixth win in seven games.

The Clippers have lost six of their last seven but are just a half-game behind Sacramento for seventh place in the west.

In Sacramento, Damon Stoudamire had 31 points, six assists and five rebounds as the Toronto Raptors used a team record with their third straight win, 103-96 over the Kings.

Marcus Camby added 23 points and six rebounds for the Raptors.

Mitch Richmond scored 26 points and Mahmoud Abdul-Rauf added 17 for the Kings, who have lost four straight following a three-game winning streak.

At Golden State, Donyell Marshall matched a career high with 30 points and Mark Price scored five of his 18 points in overtime as the Warriors stopped a 10-game losing streak against the Cleveland Cavaliers with a 101-95 victory.

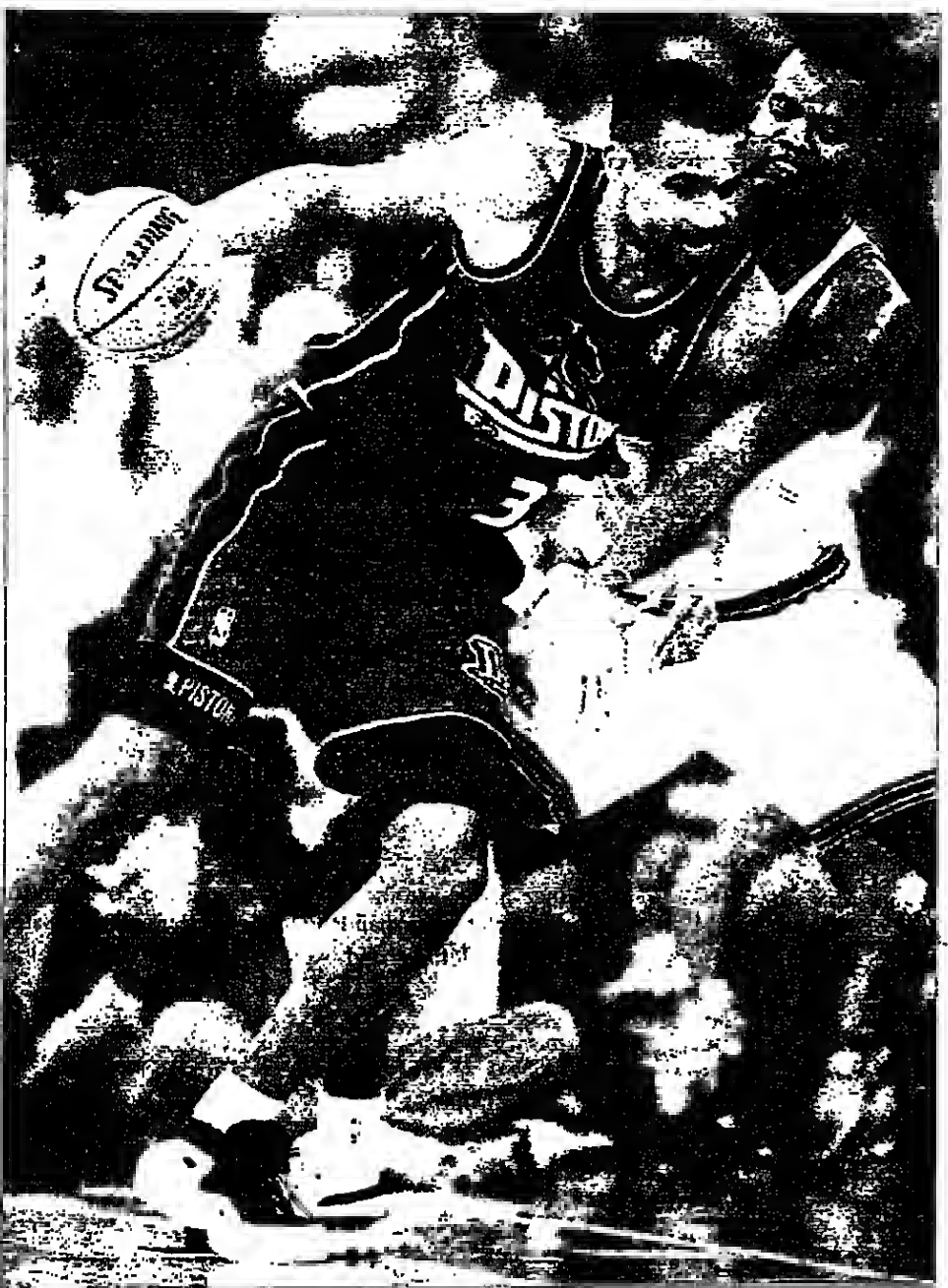
Golden State had not defeated the Cavaliers since March 5, 1992.

Danny Ferry scored 21 points for Cleveland, which lost for the fourth time in six games.

In Minnesota, Gary Payton scored 29 points as the Seattle SuperSonics extended their dominance over the Timberwolves with a 108-92 victory.



Golden State Warriors guard Latrell Sprewell (15) puts a shot up over the outstretched hands of Cleveland Cavaliers center Tyrone Hill (32) in the first quarter of their NBA game. Golden State defeated Cleveland 101-95 (Reuters photo)



Detroit Pistons' forward Grant Hill (L) muscled his way toward the basket against Denver Nuggets' forward Dale Ellis (R) in first period NBA action in Denver. Detroit defeated Denver 102-82 (Reuters photo)

Shawn Kemp recorded 16 points, nine rebounds and six assists and Hersey Hawkins added 13 points for Seattle, which has beaten the Wolves 24 consecutive times since a 100-96 Minnesota overtime victory on March 15, 1991.

In Denver, Grant Hill scored 28 points, grabbed 14 rebounds and dished out seven assists as the Detroit Pistons handed the Nuggets their 12th loss in 14 games, 102-82.

The Pistons completed a 3-2 road trip.

NBA RESULTS

| | | | |
|--------------|-----|-------------|---------|
| Seattle | 108 | Minnesota | 92 |
| Dallas | 109 | Boston | 107 |
| Detroit | 102 | Denver | 82 |
| Golden State | 101 | Cleveland | 95 (OT) |
| Phoenix | 112 | LA Clippers | 96 |
| Toronto | 103 | Sacramento | 96 |

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In preparation for World Cup qualifiers Syrian soccer team meets Jordan Sunday

By Aileen Bannayan
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Syrian national soccer team arrives here Saturday to play their Jordanian counterparts in a friendly international Sunday afternoon as both teams prepare for the Asian World Cup qualifiers next month.

The Jordanian team had less than 48 hours of rest after arriving from Muscat where they beat Oman 2-0 and 4-1 on the third leg of the team's training camps abroad.

The team's head coaches now hope to finalise the lineup with two weeks remaining for the kick-off of the Group 3 qualifiers against Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates.

Team manager Abdullatif Abdul Majid said the head coach and officials were happy with the team's form following their visit to Oman.

"The two wins over Oman were undoubtedly important for the team's morale. Six consecutive weeks of uninterrupted training paid off and the players seem confident of their abilities," he noted.

Abdul Majid said the players' physical fitness was on the rise and only Ra'fat Ali had been injured and ruled out for six weeks.

Jordan will be meeting their Syrian counterparts in Damascus next week to conclude the last of their eight friendly matches prior to the qualifiers.

Jordan had played two matches against Lebanon losing 1-0 in Beirut and drawing 0-0 in Amman. Against the Iraqi team Jordan twice lost 1-0 in Baghdad.

Team official Mohammad Awad said the matches against Syria would be the final chance to test tactics and form.

"The training camps were crucial and effective," he said. "Knowing the federation's capabilities nothing more could have been done to better prepare our team for the qualifiers."

Seven of Al Faisali's players, including top strikers Subhi

Suleiman and Jiryes Tadros joined the national team's camp in Muscat following their team's participation and third place finish in the Arab Champions Cup in Morocco last week.

Tadros was instrumental in the matches in Oman and scored the four goals in the 4-1 win in the second match.

Thirty-six Asian countries will contest the first round World Cup qualifiers and have been divided into ten groups.

Group 1: Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Bangladesh and Taiwan.

Group 2: Iran, Syria, Maldives, Kyrgyzstan.

Group 3: United Arab Emirates, Jordan, Bahrain.

Group 4: Japan, Oman, Nepal, Macao.

Group 5: Uzbekistan, Indonesia, Yemen, Cambodia.

Group 6: South Korea, Thailand, Hong Kong.

Group 7: Kuwait, Lebanon, Singapore.

Group 8: China, Turkmenistan, Vietnam, Tajikistan.

Group 9: Iraq, Pakistan, Kazakhstan.

Group 10: Qatar, India, Sri Lanka, Philippines.

The 10 groups winners will qualify for the second round where the teams will be divided into two groups.

The first two from each group will then contest the Asian finals.

The first three qualify directly for the 1998 World Cup in France while the winner of a play-off between the fourth team and the Oceania Zone winner will also qualify.

The Kingdom's team includes Ahmad Abu Nasouh, Mu'taz Rishah, Mohammad Abu Daoud, Yousef Ammouri, Mohammad Khaz'ali, Abdallah Abu Zame'h, Amjad Taher, Faisal Ibrahim, Isam Mahmoud, Hussein Shanineh, Ra'fat Ali, Adnan Awad, Khaled Yousef, Walid Abdul Rahman, Munir Abu Hantash, Aref Hussein, Nari Yada, Bassam Al Khatib, Ahmad Khalil, Mohammad Mahadin, Jamal Abu Abed, Suhbi Suleiman, Ja'far Hammad, Hassounah Sheikh and Jiryes Tadros.

Sanchez Vicario eliminated at Evert Cup

INDIAN WELLS, California (Agencies) — Top seed Arantxa Sanchez Vicario's quest for her first tournament title since last May will have to wait now that sixth seed Irina Spirela of Romania pushed her aside 4-6 6-3 6-3 Thursday in the semifinals of the Evert Cup.

The 11th-ranked Spirela's win in the only match of the day was her third consecutive victory over the fourth-ranked Sanchez Vicario after losing to the Spaniard the first two times they played.

Spirela will play the winner of the all-American semifinal match-up between fourth seed Lindsay Davenport and ninth seed Mary Joe Fernandez.

By reaching the semifinals here Spirela's guaranteed a career high ranking of ninth come Monday morning.

Sanchez Vicario has captured 24 career titles, but Spirela is no stranger to winning tournaments herself. This Saturday will mark Spirela's eighth visit to a tour final. She has won four titles.

Sanchez Vicario used to be known for her consistency, but not lately. Against

Spirela she sprayed 30 unforced errors all over the place — into the net and beyond the boundaries of the court.

In addition, Sanchez Vicario ended the one hour, 59 minute match with a slim 15 outright winners.

"I think she's a good player and she has a very good forehand," Sanchez Vicario said. "She's improved a lot lately."

Although Spirela posted 50 unforced errors, she reduced her mistakes with each successive set. And she had more than double the number of winners than Sanchez Vicario: 34.

Berasategui, Pioline reach quarters

Alberto Berasategui, the only seed left in the top half of the Champions Cup draw, moved into the quarter-finals on Thursday with

a straight-set victory over Jonathan Stark.

France's Cedric Pioline also reached the round of eight with a three-set win over Swedish wild-card Magnus Larsson.

Berasategui, the 14th seed, defeated the high-serving American 7-6 (8/6), 6-3. Stark had upset fourth-seeded Croatian Goran Ivanisevic on Wednesday.

Pioline, who had never made it past the second round here, defeated Larsson 6-7 (6/8), 6-2, 6-4. Larsson, too, came into the third round with an upset under his belt, having dispatched fifth-seeded Chilean Marcelo Rios in the second round.

"It's very important for me to win a match like this," said Pioline, who has struggled to get his season going after skipping the Australian Open.

Coming into Indian Wells

he had won two and lost six of his matches in 1997. The defeats included two Davis cup singles failures against Pat Rafter and Sandon Stolle in Australia.

In the quarters Pioline will face either third-seeded Michael Chang, the defending champion, or 13th-seeded Swiss Marc Rosset, who played on stadium court on Thursday afternoon.

In other third-round matches on Thursday, Czech giant-killer Bohdan Ulihrach took on Spain's Francisco Clavet, just a day after Ulihrach stopped World No.1 Pete Sampras' 20 match winning streak.

Sweden's Jonas Bjorkman took on American Chris Woodruff for a chance to play Berasategui and Byron Black was scheduled to play Brazil's Gustavo Kuerten.

Austrian Thomas Muster was scheduled to play Czech Slava Dosedel.

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Plane crashes with 86 aboard in Iran

TEHRAN (R) — An Iranian military plane with 86 people on board crashed in a mountainous region in northeastern Iran and there was no news of survivors, Iranian state media said on Friday.

The C-130 Hercules transport plane crashed 39 kilometres from the city of Mashhad on Thursday, the official news agency IRNA said.

State-run Tehran Radio said the pilot reported engine failure before the plane disappeared in mountains near Neyshabour, 75 kilometres west of Mashhad.

Search teams had been sent to the area but had not yet found wreckage of the plane, which was flying to Mashhad from the southwestern city of Dezful, the radio said.

IRNA said the control tower at Mashhad airport lost contact with the plane at 6 p.m. (1430 GMT) on Thursday. It gave no further details.

"As soon as we receive new information on the fate of this plane's passengers, we will bring to the attention of the nation," the radio said.

The accident is the latest in a series of air crashes in the past few years involving civilian and military planes, most of which date from before the 1979 revolution.

Iranian authorities have blamed some of the accidents on technical failures in the ageing planes but have

not fully explained the causes of other crashes.

Earlier this month, four Iranians were killed when a light military transport plane on a relief mission to Iran's quake-stricken northwest crashed in bad weather.

In April 1995, a military training plane crashed south of Tehran during an armed forces day parade, killing the pilot and injuring four people when the wreckage hit residential areas.

In January 1995, an air force Lockheed C-140 Jetstar crash killed Iran's air force commander along with four generals and seven other officers. The incident was the second time since the revolution that the country's air force chief and senior officers had died in a plane crash.

In October 1994, a Fokker F-28 of the state-owned Asseman airlines with 66 people on board, crashed on a flight from Isfahan to Tehran. There were no survivors.

In March 1994, a military C-130 plane, bringing home families of Iranian diplomats in Moscow, was hit by a missile apparently fired by Armenian forces in the disputed Nagorno-Karabakh region in Azerbaijan. All 32 people on board were killed.

In February 1993, a Sukhoi fighter crashed in mid-air near Tehran with a Tupolev TU-154 chartered by a subsidiary of the state carrier Iran Air. All 134 people aboard the two planes were killed.

Israel rejects U.N. resolutions

(Continued from page 1)

States to broker a swift end to the crisis in Israeli-Arab relations over the plans for the 6,500-apartment Jewish settlement.

The U.S. State Department has said it is appropriate for Mr. Arafat to "talk to friendly countries around the world."

In an interview published on Friday in Israel's mass circulation Yedioth Ahronot newspaper, Mr. Arafat said Israeli-Palestinian relations were in the deepest crisis since their 1993 Oslo peace accords. The interview was given before Thursday's shooting.

"This is not just 'another crisis,' he said. 'This is the most serious crisis since the Oslo process began, and it has far-reaching implications. You can say the process has stopped.'"

The government of Israel has stopped it."

"The government of Israel is simply misleading us," Mr. Arafat told Yedioth. "It's decisions that it wants to impose on us are literally a conspiracy against peace. And Israel is the one that will bear all the results of that."

The interviewer noted that Israel contends the decisions did not contradict peace accords.

"They contradict the letter and the spirit of the accords," Mr. Arafat replied. "The fact is the whole world thinks so, and said so at the United Nations. Is the whole world wrong and only Netanyahu right?"

Mr. Arafat rejected the idea Mr. Netanyahu was subject to pressures from right-wing members of his government.

"That's strange. He has to be pressed? After all, he agrees with them," Mr. Arafat was quoted as saying. "If he wants to lead Israel into an era of peace he has to reject the pressures, if they are real. But we believe he is of one mind with the extremists and only when he really has no choice he corrects the course a little."

"We don't have any faith left in the other side," Mr. Arafat told the paper.

Mr. Arafat called Saturday's meeting as part of a strategy of building pressure on Israel over its settlement plans and its decision to hand only a small portion of additional West Bank land to Palestinian rule.

Israeli officials on Friday were unbending.

"We were opposed to this meeting even before the terrorist attack because it violates the Palestinian Authority's commitments to negotiate disputes which arise between us," said government spokesman Moshe Fogel. "We are even more opposed to it today."

"How can anyone imagine that barely 24 hours after such a

vile crime, diplomats can get together to scold Israel," he asked.

The Israeli press was unanimous Friday in blaming Thursday's shooting on what the Haaretz newspaper called a "campaign of incitement" waged in the Arab World via repeated public warnings that Mr. Netanyahu's policies would lead to violence.

Palestinians welcomed on Friday the U.N. resolution condemning Israeli settlement plans as "proof of Israel's isolation."

But a spokesman for Mr. Arafat also hit out at the United States for being the sole state to vote alongside Israel against the resolution in the U.N. General Assembly.

"This is a world consensus, recognising Palestinian rights and is clear proof of Israel's isolation," said Nabil Abu Rdaina, Mr. Arafat's top adviser.

"We criticise the U.S. decision to vote against this international unanimity," he added in a statement on the official Voice of Palestine Radio.

Mr. Abu Rdaina also said that there were no preparations underway for a meeting between Mr. Arafat and Netanyahu.

The U.N. text called the building of Jewish neighbourhoods in Arab East Jerusalem "illegal" and a "major obstacle to peace."

The resolution, co-sponsored by 42 states including the 15-member European Union, garnered the support of 130 nations.

A U.S. veto barred a similar resolution from being adopted last week at the U.N. Security Council.

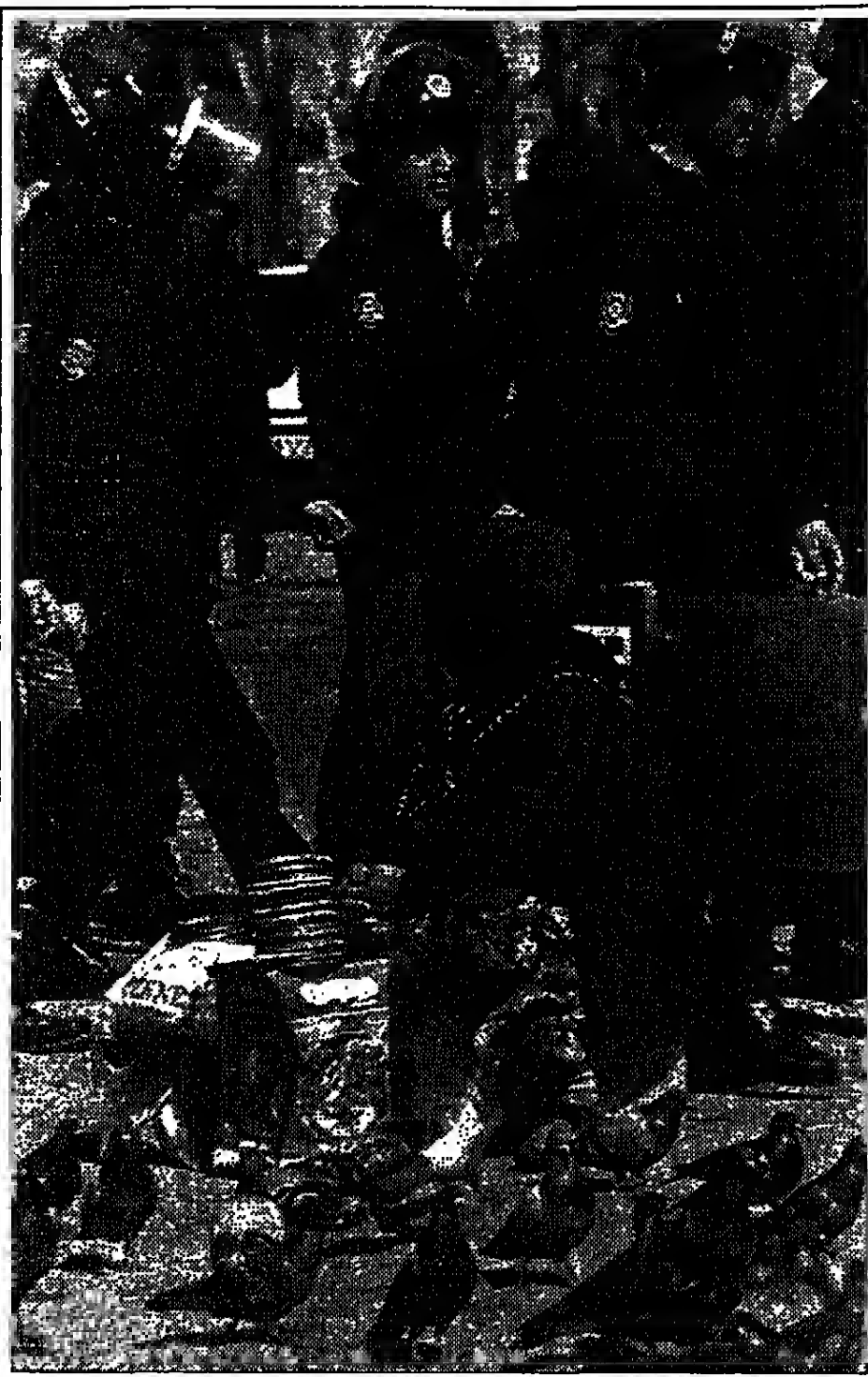
The U.S. ambassador to the United Nations was Friday forced to defend Washington's decision to attend Saturday's meeting.

Jewish leaders at a closed-door breakfast meeting at the U.N. with U.S. envoy Bill Richardson expressed consternation about the U.S. decision to send U.S. consul general in Jerusalem to Saturday's meeting in Gaza City, participants said.

Malcolm Hoenlein, executive vice-chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish organizations, told AFP afterwards that bringing in outside powers to the Gaza meeting would "undermine the peace process and be counterproductive."

Mr. Richardson said he told the Jewish leaders that the Gaza meeting was "not a negotiation," but Mr. Hoenlein rejected the argument.

"Saying that this is a one-shot deal will in the future come back to haunt us. It's setting a precedent," he said.



TURKISH POLICE ON ALERT: Turkish riot police in full riot gear walk past a Gypsy women selling food for pigeons in Beyazit Square in Istanbul on Friday. Turkey security forces on full alert on Friday for Islamist demonstrations after the ruling Islamists said they had not given up their mission to increase the role of religion in public life despite giving in to army demands for a crackdown on Islamic activism (Reuters photo)

Yemen says no ransom paid for hostages

SANAA (AFP) — President Ali Abdullah Saleh said Friday no ransom was paid for the seven Germans kidnapped by Yemeni tribesmen, as the freed tourists were reunited with their tour motorbikes and prepared to fly home.

Peter Skorsky, a 45-year-old veteran from Munich, said his group was to return to Frankfurt early Saturday on a Yemeni flight.

"The Yemeni government did not meet any demand of the kidnappers who held the German tourists hostage, and they will be put on trial under the constitution and laws," Mr. Saleh said, quoted by the official news agency SABA.

But there was no official word on whether the kidnappers, who reportedly demanded at least \$7 million, have been captured since the Germans were freed unharmed on Wednesday.

The German foreign ministry has said it was unaware of the circumstances of the release but that paying a ransom had been ruled out.

The authorities never publicly admit to paying ransoms to notoriously unruly Yemeni tribes. But around 80 foreigners have been kidnapped by tribesmen since 1993 and all have been freed unharmed.

For the German tourists, all motorcycle enthusiasts in search of adventure and rough terrain, their 10 days in the hands of mountain tribesmen in remote eastern Yemen was more than they bargained for, said Mr. Skorsky.

"We are well but we now have to overcome this psychologically," he told AFP. Some of his fellow tourists have had nightmares and difficulty sleeping over the last two nights.

"We were looking for an adventure but I would never have come if I knew this was going to happen," he said. "It's a beautiful country but the whole thing has been coloured by our experience."

Mr. Skorsky, owner of a Honda African twin 750 CC, said the Yemeni authorities flew their motorbikes to Sanaa early on Friday and the Germans were at the airport to collect them.

Princess Basma attends forum on Earth Charter

RIO DE JANEIRO (Petra) — Her Royal Highness Princess Basma has begun a visit here to take part in the Rio Five International forum, which will review and evaluate the efforts made by the United Nations and the U.N. Security Council to implement the recommendations of the Earth Summit held in June 1992.

Princess Basma was elected a member of the "Earth Board" in December 1995, and was also selected as a member of a committee in charge of drawing up "the Earth Charter."

The committee, which groups 20 members who are well-known for their great contribution to sustainable development, includes among others former President of the Soviet Union Mikhail Gorbachev and President of the Earth Board Morris Strong.

The committee will discuss the draft Earth Charter

and put it in its final form in preparation for submitting it to the U.N. for its endorsement as a global reference document on sustainable development before the turn of this century.

Taking part in the summit will be 500 people, including representatives of grass-root organisations, local sustainable development councils, non-governmental organisations, scientific and research institutions concerned with sustainable development, in addition to financing, industrial, commercial and educational institutions, in addition to religious leaders, and intellectuals concerned with sustainable development.

Jordan started implementing a national programme on sustainable development for the 21st century as of January 1st this year. The programme will serve as an umbrella and framework for developmental activities in Jordan.

Mr. Khashoggi is wanted on charges of embezzling 2 billion baht (\$80 million) from the BBC, which virtually collapsed last year under the weight of billions of baht of questionable loans; the spokesman said.

Meanwhile, a British citizen, Terry Easter, 57, was arrested Friday in connection with loans he allegedly contracted without collateral from the BBC.

The spokesman from the economic crimes division said.

Police said Mr. Easter, arrested on a warrant issued last year, stood accused of embezzling 1.65 billion baht from the BBC, clarifying earlier statements attributing that figure to Mr. Khashoggi's arrest warrant.

Police Colonel Prachukinsinlapa Subranahsuji, who is in charge of the Khashoggi case, said the warrant was only valid for Thailand but that an international warrant would be sought.

"We have asked Interpol to issue an international arrest warrant as Mr. Khashoggi gave false evidence outside the country," he said.

Mr. Prachukinsinlapa alleged that Mr. Khashoggi was guilty of "cheating and fraud," and had colluded with top BBC executives to secure massive sums in loans for other unnamed clients.

Saddam sends message to King on U.N. inspections

AMMAN (Petra) — Iraqi President Saddam Hussein has sent a message to His Majesty King Hussein dealing with the latest developments in the Iraqi situation and the U.N. committee in charge of dismantling Iraq chaired by Swedish diplomat Rolf Ekeus.

The message was handed to Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti by Iraqi Minister of Culture and Information Hamed Hammadi on Thursday.

Mr. Kabariti said in a statement later that the message stressed Iraq's commitment to the implementation of U.N. Security Council resolutions in full, adding that nothing was left as an excuse

for the committee to accuse Iraq of failing to comply with any resolutions.

He said the Iraqi government hopes that the Arab countries will now adopt a stand in support of lifting all the sanctions imposed on Iraq for invading Kuwait in 1990.

Mr. Kabariti voiced Jordan's total support for the Iraqi people, stressing the futility of sanctions to achieve political objectives.

The meeting was attended by acting Minister of Information Nasser Lawzi.

Upon arrival in Amman earlier Mr. Hammadi said that the message to the King covered also Jordanian-Iraqi relations.

Sahaf slams Britain for 'hostile policies' towards Saddam

BAGHDAD (AP) — Foreign Minister Mohammed Saeed Al-Sahaf blasted Britain on Friday for what he described as its hostile policies against Iraq and President Saddam Hussein.

Mr. Al Sahaf was commenting on a statement Wednesday by British Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind saying that U.N. sanctions on Iraq will remain so long as President Saddam is in power.

"The British minister's statement is full of despicable expressions which reflect his ... hatred against Iraq and President Saddam Hussein," Mr. Al Sahaf said in a statement carried by the official Iraqi news agency.

Mr. Rifkind, who made his remarks after talks in London with Saudi Defence Minister Prince Sultan, said there was an agreement between Britain and Saudi Arabia on the need to maintain pressure on President Saddam to implement U.N. resolutions arising from Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait and its defeat in the 1991 Gulf war.

Mr. Al Sahaf said Iraq has complied with all U.N. resolutions and insisted that it was time now for the world body to lift the sanctions, which include a ban on vital oil exports.

The U.N. Security Council will consider lifting the sanctions when arms inspectors from the

world body are convinced that Iraq destroyed all its mass destruction weapons.

Iraqis suffering oppression and deprivation have only one choice — shut up or die, according to Iraqi dissident Fares Al Aani.

After more than six years of a crippling U.N. embargo, the people of Iraq "are living a human drama without precedent in history," said Mr. Aani, who arrived in Syria recently from Jordan.

In Iraq, where "everything is under threat, the standard of living of the leaders as much as the people, the only obvious choice is to shut up or die," Mr. Aani told AFP.

"Iraq, which was the strongest and richest Arab country, is today needy, citizens have to steal and kill to find their bread, or they commit suicide to escape ruin," said the former member of the presidential cabinet, who took refuge in Jordan "several months ago."

Mr. Aani, 53, was speaking from the Damascus office of the Iraqi opposition party Al Watan. He declined to give the exact date he fled Jordan with his wife and two children aged nine and 14 in order not to expose the rest of his family remaining in Iraq.

"Freedom, like bread, is not assured in Iraq, where the least criticism leads to prison or murder," he said.

Thailand issues warrant for Khashoggi's arrest

BANGKOK (AFP) — Thailand issued an arrest warrant Friday for Saudi billionaire Adnan Khashoggi in connection with a scandal at the Bangkok Bank of Commerce (BBC), a police spokesman said.

Mr. Khashoggi is wanted on charges of embezzling 2 billion baht (\$80 million) from the BBC, which virtually collapsed last year under the weight of billions of baht of questionable loans; the spokesman said.

Meanwhile, a British citizen, Terry Easter, 57, was arrested Friday in connection with loans he allegedly contracted without collateral from the BBC.

The spokesman from the economic crimes division said.

Police said Mr. Easter, arrested on a warrant issued last year, stood accused of embezzling 1.65 billion baht from the BBC, clarifying earlier statements attributing that figure to Mr. Khashoggi's arrest warrant.

Police Colonel Prachukinsinlapa Subranahsuji, who is in charge of the Khashoggi case, said the warrant was only valid for Thailand but that an international warrant would be sought.

"We have asked Interpol to issue an international arrest warrant as Mr. Khashoggi gave false evidence outside the country," he said.

Mr. Prachukinsinlapa alleged that Mr. Khashoggi was guilty of "cheating and fraud," and had colluded with top BBC executives to secure massive sums in loans for other unnamed clients.

"They asked for loans from the BBC but the information they declared was false. They committed cheating and fraud together," he added.

Mr. Easter, the Briton who was arrested Friday, was identified as the managing director of City Trading corporation.

Press reports last year said City Trading was registered in the Cayman Islands and had been the beneficiary of loans from the BBC.

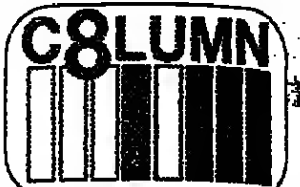
The reports said the company had put up land as collateral which had been greatly overvalued in order to secure large loans.

Four other warrants were issued Friday in separate cases involving the troubled bank, including one for Rakesh Saxena, the former BBC financial advisor who is currently battling extradition from Canada on similar charges.

BBC executives have been accused of presiding over cumulative losses of 1.7 billion baht, much of it due to the amassing of billions of baht in bad or doubtful debts.

Officials at the Bank of Thailand, which has taken over the reins at BBC, declined Friday to estimate the level of bad debts held by the troubled bank.

The Bank of Thailand came under attack during a censure debate in parliament last May when the opposition accused the central bank of knowing about chronic problems at the BBC for two years and failing to act.



Persistence pays off for California bank robber

SAN FRANCISCO — The second time proved the charm for a brash bandit who made off with \$600 from a San Francisco bank one day after his first attempt to rob the same branch was foiled. Police said the thief robbed a First Nationwide Bank branch in San Francisco on Tuesday. The teller turned over \$2,400 in a bag that contained a dye sack, used as a security measure. When the dye sack exploded, the robber dropped the loot and ran. Undaunted, the man returned to the same branch on Wednesday, approached the same teller and demanded cash. The teller turned over \$600 and this time the bandit got away. Police said there was no dye sack in the money on Wednesday. Police said the robber's persistence was surprising. "We've had people do the same banks, but not two days in a row," San Francisco police inspector Tom Horan said.

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